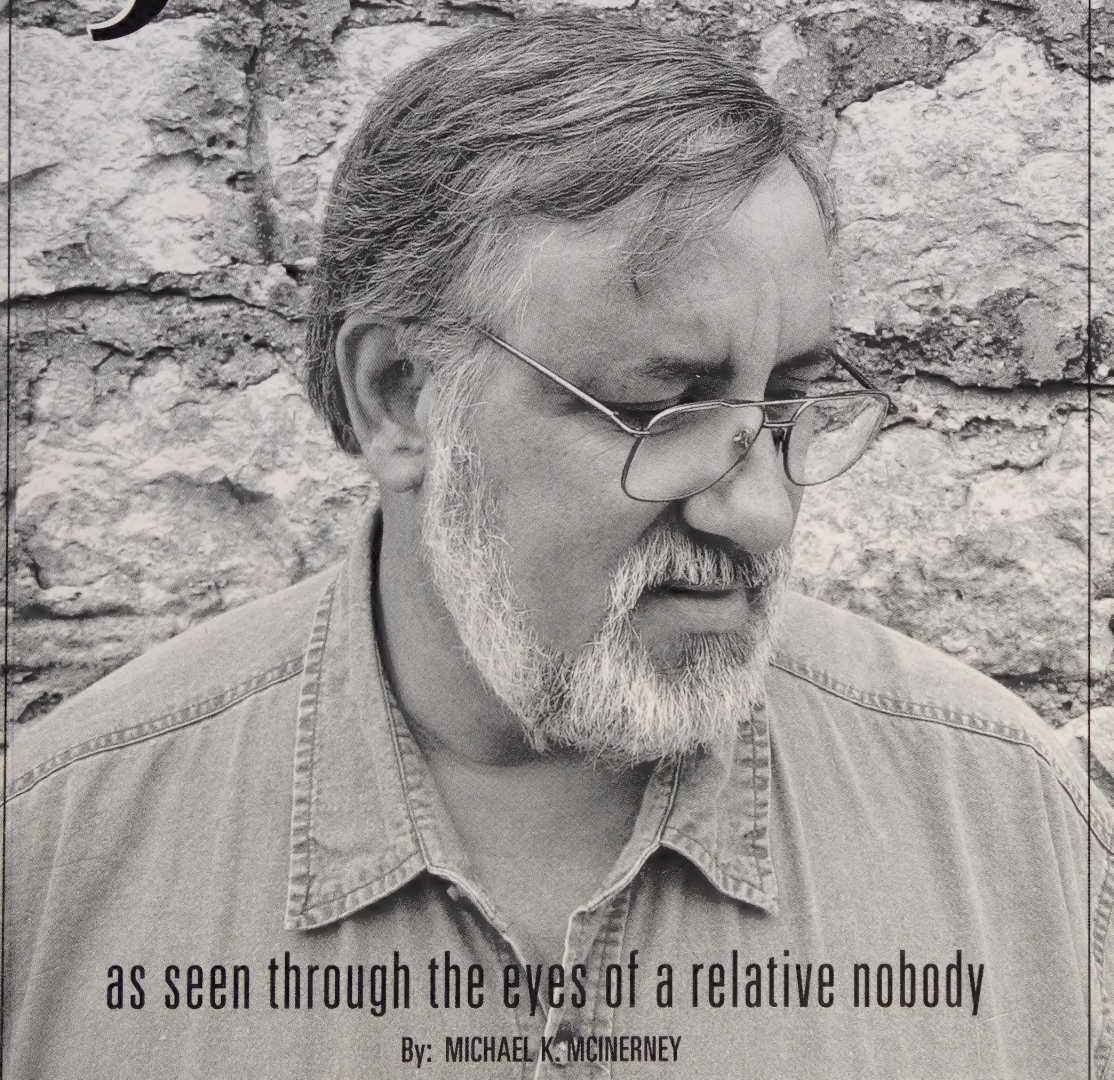


VOLUME 1, CHAPTERS 1-9

# The Gospel of JOHN



as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody

By: MICHAEL K. MCINERNEY

Mike Mc Innes

May 2, 2009



# The Gospel of JOHN



as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody

# **The Gospel of John**

## **As Seen Through the Eyes of a Relative Nobody**

### **Volume One, Chapters 1-9**

**by Michael K. McInerney**

Copyright 2008 © by Michael K. McInerney.

All rights reserved

This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise – without prior written permission of the author, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation  
Used by permission." ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))

**ISBN 978-0-9824401-0-0**

Printed in the United States of America



## Contents:

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Personal Comments</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter One</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter Two</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Chapter Three</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Chapter Four</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Chapter Five</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Chapter Six</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Chapter Nine</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Closing notes</b>	<b>233</b>



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my wife Laurie. She is the reason I am saved; she pointed me to the Word of God in 1986 and through the Word I was born again. She has supported my work in serving the Lord through “fulltime ministry” but also in the more important ministry of engaging people daily for the glory of God.

We have raised three children together. She has been there for me when things have looked bleak as well as exciting, during moves and when I have traveled to Canada, Mexico and frequently all over the United States “to yet another place she hasn’t been to yet”. <grin>

She has endured my long hours in the counseling room, opening our home for “gatherings” and the time I spend with countless people in pastoral care.

She’s cried with me, laughed with me and goofed around with me. After 23 years we still hold hands a lot and enjoy one another immensely. She is my best friend.

I love you, babe!

Thank you for believing in Christ in me!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful, first of all, that one of the important men in my life, Lew Shaffer, has encouraged me since we first met many years ago to, "Write a book!" I would jokingly tell him that I would write one as soon as I knew something. When I got the manuscript for the first edit Lew got the very first copy. It's good to honor the people God brings into your life.

Thanks go to Mary Macsas who worked so closely with me, spending hours of her private time, on the first and second proofreading and edits. Her sacrifice and gently suggested corrections and adjustments were perfect.

I also am thankful for Shari Gunter who is my pastor's wife but also our friend. Someday I will write a piece about her editing skills and will entitle it "Acres of Commas" in honor of all the red ink she used to remind me how to better use commas. Her hours of work are greatly appreciated.

The painstaking editing of the manuscript that these two faithful women of God have done has helped to make this a book that I am proud to present on behalf of the Lord.

Thanks also to Jack Clausen for lending his artistic gifts and talents and publishing know-how to produce the book's beautiful cover. I appreciate the time and focus and patience he has put into this effort.

I am also appreciative of the many people and three local congregations that believe in us, pray for us, encourage us and donate faithfully to our ministry. As a true faith ministry we never charge for anything we do. Therefore, we have depended upon that support to enable me to minister to so many locally, nationally and worldwide (through the internet). It is also what has given me the time and flexibility to actually write "The Gospel of John – As Seen Through The Eyes of a Relative Nobody."

Finally, I am appreciative of the pastoral care that I receive from my pastor, Don Gunter. His constant prayers and available wisdom helped me as I wrote this book.

Thank you!



## SOME PERSONAL COMMENTS

This book is the result of almost two years of weekly Bible study over the internet, a realm that satan considers to be his, yet truly belongs to the Lord God. Virtually every week between November 9, 2004 and August 1, 2006 I taught on the Undernet server network (IRC) in a channel named #TheRock. The raw teaching from those studies have been compiled and presented here in book form.

The book has been broken into two volumes in order to make them easier to handle due to how many pages of text there are and to satisfy copywrite requirements. Volume One addresses chapters 1-9 of the Gospel of John.

The title of this book is "The Gospel of John" and is subtitled "as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody". The subtitle is meant to point out that in the earthly world of "professional" clergy I am a "relative nobody"; having included this in my sub-title reveals that this really does not bother me. My view of the body of Christ is that there is one head: Jesus. The rest of us (titles, levels of education, roles and gifts notwithstanding) are equal. In the earthly sense, we are all "nobodies" when compared to Jesus. In the spiritual sense, the same price was paid for every Christian – the blood and life of Jesus; therefore, all are unspeakably valuable and none are "nobodies."

Using the term in the sub-title also reflects my desire to communicate that I do not consider myself to be a Bible scholar nor have I attended seminary. The Lord has presented every believer with the opportunity to read the Word of God for himself or herself. As such, it is not necessary for anyone to have a degree in Bible to be able to understand the simplicity of the Word of God and apply it to his or her personal life.

To be sure, there is a place for the application of higher knowledge and I have taken advantage of such by using study guides and computer Bible programs to get a better handle on background information, Greek to English transliteration and context. My point is that anyone who decides to know the Lord better through studying His Word can do so and one purpose for teaching the Word of God should always be to inspire anyone to do the same on their own. The body of Christ has already suffered enough from the class system imposed on it through the non-biblical idea of laity and clergy.

The “relative” part of the sub-title refers to the fact that **I do** nonetheless have some credentials that the world might value. I hold an MA in Counseling from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia and am a licensed and ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am also a graduate of the Exchanged Life Ministries training program (Aurora, Colorado) and am credentialed as a Restorative Therapist through The Faith Based Counseling Training Institute of Belton Texas.

I entered “fulltime ministry” the same time the rest of us did: the moment I was born again but I began to focus on ministering as a style of life in early 1992 in Houston when I began working for the Encourager Center for Biblical Counseling at the Encourager Church.

In the five years I worked at the Encourager Church I served as a counselor for and then as the Coordinator of the Counseling Center, taught many bible classes and served as Pastor for Prison Ministries. I also helped start another counseling center with two friends and then began to minister under the banner of Mike McInerney Ministries, Inc. in Decatur, Texas which is completely faith-based (as we charge nothing for anything that we do.) Our efforts now include personal pastoring (in the first century style), Bible teaching, preaching, writing, counseling, presenting conferences, prison and jail ministry and mentoring.

My main credential, though, is something I share with **every** born again person: I am a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), am literally indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God (Romans 8:9-11) and to the best of my ability I allow Him to lead me (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18). Anyone can have this “credential”. All we have to do is invite Jesus to be the Lord of our lives and then allow Him to be that in our lives!

Throughout the study I actively solicited the Holy Spirit to be the Teacher through any Christian present in the chat channel.

**“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26)**

Seeking the Holy Spirit to be the Teacher we were open to any rabbit trails He might want to explore. I believe He knows what He is doing and will lead us to things we didn’t even know we needed.

Any input that was pertinent to the study has been folded into this piece as if it were coming from a single Teacher, which should be the case, if the Holy Spirit really is teaching through yielded believers.



My belief is that, ideally, the Bible should be taught in three ways at once whenever possible:

- 1) The text should be presented in context to reveal what the Lord intended the original hearers to glean from the text.
- 2) The text should be presented to see how it applies to the body of Christ as a whole over time and in the present since the Word exists as spiritual input on the earthly plain to a spiritual people.
- 3) The text should be presented in such a way as to inspire each individual reader to apply it to his or her own personal life.

**“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13 NASB)**

Since my pastoral and other spiritual gifts are equipping gifts I tend to stress the third of those approaches more than the other two. While all three are important, it strikes me that the Lord has chosen that we be here now. It's very important that we apply ourselves to the building of God's Kingdom where and when we are as He directs.

As you read this study you will see this approach unfold. I constantly stress the idea of “what do we do with this in our lives right now?” and I strongly urge you to do that when you read. Ask Him what He wants you to do with what you are learning and ask Him to reveal other things that may not even be specifically mentioned in this study but are provoked by what you read here.

It's an exciting thing to be actively led by the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. He knows what His intentions for His Kingdom are and He knows what you and I need. Let's journey together and witness His plans manifest in our lives.

Pastor Mike McInerney

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The Christian world is filled with commentaries on every book of the Bible. These are wonderful study helps and I have used many as I have taught online, one on one and in Bible classes and study groups. The world can do without yet another commentary from me.

The initial purpose for me writing this book is that God told me to do so. I've frustrated some of the people who love me by not having any aspirations for this book other than to simply write it. I was asked while writing it if I planned to publish it. My response was, "I'm not sure. The Lord said to write the book, so I'm writing it. I'll ask His opinion about what to do next when I finish writing the book." The fact that you have it in your hands in its current form tells you that He's told me to take it further than simply writing it.

A person can read "**The Gospel of John - as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody**" and walk away from it with a deeper sense of who Jesus is. He can also have a deeper understanding of what the Spirit intended for all Christians when He had John pen this gospel. That is a big part of what this particular treatment of this gospel exists to accomplish.

The primary purpose for this book is to be a Christian primer of sorts. A primer is an assembly of elementary principles. This book serves in that way by explaining concepts like salvation, righteousness, freedom in Christ and a host of others that often seem to fall through the cracks for new believers.

When I was saved I was associated with a wonderful congregation that definitely provided me with an opportunity to allow a good foundation to be built in me. I wouldn't trade my Christian spiritual origins for anything. One thing **did** happen there, though, that was not positive, even given that it happened with good intentions in mind.

Soon after I was born again I was handed a workbook that our denomination had produced. It contained 52 weeks of "lessons" the theme of which was "Do this. Don't do that." In that book were many encouragements to not practice behaviors that were not acceptable to the members of that kind of church and often to God as well and many to make habits of things that they did approve (some of which I am convinced to this day that do not really matter to the Father.)



That book was given to me to try to fill the gap that exists in so many congregations and small groups throughout the body of Christ. The gap is the glaring absence of true discipleship, something that Jesus considered to be very important.

**“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:18-20 NASB)**

Jesus told us to make disciples. That’s because it isn’t instinctive for a new believer to be a disciple of Jesus. It took the original disciples a long period of intense relationship with Jesus and with one another to become disciples of Jesus. To this day, nothing else will do to make disciples for Jesus.

The body of Christ uses books like the one I was given, Bible classes and peer pressure to try to make people be better on the inside. This really amounts to law, a system Jesus came to fulfill and fully satisfy, being imposed on new creations in Christ who are designed by Him to thrive instead on grace, a live, here and now empowerment from heaven.

Real change will never come from the outside in and so, if this book I have written is used in that way, it too will fail.

Instead, I have written **“The Gospel of John - as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody”** in such a way that it models a style that seems more the intent of the Spirit than trying to force internal change from an external world. All through this book is championed the expectation that Christ **wants** to live His life out through us. I emphasize the Spirit’s desire to direct, teach, accompany, correct...to live through us. He doesn’t just want to **BE** in us; He is there to **DWELL** – to fully populate and fill us.

And so, in addition to being a Christian primer of sorts this book is an encouragement to live a “from deep inside – out” life in Christ. It highlights a style of approaching Jesus and yielding to Jesus that I believe was common practice in the first century.

This is also a primer for Christian ministry. By this I do not refer to the “professional” vocation that we often see as “The Ministry” in institutional Christianity, although I believe that as one who has functioned in that way at times the principles in this book have been of benefit to me. Rather, by “ministry” I refer to what some call the “priesthood of the believer.”

**“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”  
(2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NASB)**

This priesthood is for all believers. I encourage you, therefore, as ministers of reconciliation to use this book and whatever else the Lord provides as an encouragement to practice this part of your inheritance in Christ. Ideas are modeled and situations are presented as “go-by’s” and not as systems (or flesh) on how to go through “ministry steps”.

Seek the Lord’s direction about the attitude and spirit behind the ideas and situations given in the book. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to your own situations. Allow Him to teach you truths that you can verify through the Word of God and put into practice in your Christian walk and in the ministry He wants to work through you.

**“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10 NASB)**

Here’s to what the Lord will do through you as you walk with Him in increasing liberty and power!



## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of John was written by one of the Sons of Thunder (I love that name!), the Apostle John, who by the time he wrote it was a gentle thunder - still passionate, still alive and vibrant but tempered by time....age...wisdom...experience. Most of all he was tempered by the love of Jesus. May that be true for all of us when we are up in age in Jesus.

It is estimated that John was in his 80's when he wrote this gospel which is quite old for those days and it is believed that he wrote it from Ephesus where he was the oldest remaining original apostle. Some people consider him to be an elder there and why not? It works!

He writes to everyone: to new believers...Gentiles and Jews, to established believers because, though the church had flourished under several years of harsh persecution and had done well, it was good that he would encourage them with an eye witness account of one who was with Jesus. Additionally, it was written evangelistically to draw others to the Lord.

I often suggest people read John to get a good picture of the Lord. In a way calling it the Gospel of John is a misnomer because, really, it's about Jesus - not John. John knew this. He is in the book but consistently refuses to identify himself by name. So, this study is about Jesus and His effect on people.

Have you ever read something and then at the end realized that you read it wrong? I have. It caused me to think, "If I knew what the writer was trying to show me I would have read it differently." Toward the end of the book, John shows us what he wants us to see in what he has written. I often wonder if when the original readers first read it this made them go back and read it again. If so, what a cool way to get the people to read the Bible!

In John 20:31 we see John's purpose statement for this book:

**“these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

I've recently heard something that has taught me something new that I am still reasoning through: that when first century people heard that word "believe" it sounded like "be living" to them. In contrast, when a person "believes" something in **our** time it just means that we agree mentally with it.

Biblically, however, to believe something means a lot more. It means to entrust ourselves to it, to literally live it, to identify with it so much that it becomes part of us, therefore we live it out.

So when John says this: “these are written that you may believe” he is saying that he wrote something for the purpose that it would become a part of us and we would live it. This is a lot richer than mere mental assent, isn't it?

**“these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

Basically, if we break that statement down, John has two purposes here for writing this gospel:

- 1) “these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”
- 2) “these are written that believing you may have life in His name.”

First, they were written that we would so identify with the idea that Jesus is the Christ, the rescuer, the Son of God. This is so that we would live it out and it would permeate who we are and how we move through our short time on the earth.

Second, they were written so that believing, so identifying with the reality of this, that we would have life (ZOE life) in His name (in terms of Jesus in us).

I have a ministry that takes me into church buildings and connects me with Christians in various places around the United States and, via the internet, all around the globe. Doing what I do and seeing what I see has made it all too apparent that there doesn't seem to be gobs of life flowing from the body of Christ among our brethren. I'm not talking about Jesus Himself; I'm talking about us, His body. There is a distinct lack of life in evidence in us, it seems to me.

**I believe** (live out) what I am seeing as I say it. In other words, **I LIVE** that grief sometimes and I'm not alone in that - many of us do, chief of whom is our King. Why is this happening?

The culprit is our (earthly) logic-based approach to our supernatural Father and our King. We “believe” but we don't **believe**. We agree with facts, nod to them and pray a prayer and we're saved but we don't embrace a Person named Jesus. We embrace facts. We embrace membership to a subgroup of the body of Christ.

We embrace one version of many accurate versions of the Bible but we do not tend to embrace Jesus and become one with Him. We don't identify with Him and in Him is life.

**“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4)**

**“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)**

**“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)**

**“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’” (John 4:13-14)**

(See Appendix 1 for additional references)

There are at least a dozen more verses like this just in this Gospel that clearly show that Jesus came that we would have HIS life. The Bible is brimming with this truth. He came. He did as He intended to do. We receive Him as Savior.

But then, in the way Christianity is all too often presented and practiced, the life gets drained right out of this experience. Basically, this happens because we go to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for direction instead of the tree of Life. Logic is good but we cannot logic our way into the Life of Jesus. If we could, there would be no reason for the Word of God nor the things the Lord chooses to bring our way. We could just think our way into His life.

Recently I watched some children take turns hugging a woman of God who loves them. They hugged SO BIG that it looked as if they were becoming the woman they were hugging. They were “believing” in her.

**“these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

As you read this study and as you read the Gospel of John it would be good to read John 20:31 first. It is my hope that when we do so we won't just come to know some facts better than we already do (which is good in itself) but we will



come out of this knowing Jesus better and we will identify more with Him and will BE like Him as He transforms us...pouring His life in us....over us....through us. How's that for an image and a hope?

**I wanna see some power!** And not just for the thrill of it. When we see His power in us...over us...through us we know we are on the right track. That's when we know we are WITH Him. Jesus is the focus of this book as He should be the focus of our existence.  
He IS our life.

Pastor Mike McInerney  
Mike McInerney Ministries  
© February 21, 2007

## CHAPTER ONE

**Father God, in the name of Jesus we ask You to be with us in this study. We ask You to speak to and through us. Teach us, individually and as a group, things You want us to know to keep us on and to further us along the path You have for us. Equip us please. We ask You to control all things that would distract us every time we read Your Word. Be Lord of this time. Be LARGE in us. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)**

What other book starts out with those words: “In the beginning....”? Genesis does! John connects those two dots. Jesus was there in the very beginning and John sees Jesus as Jesus is. He **is** the beginning, the commencement.

There are two words in the Greek for “word” = “logos” and “rhema”. The one used here is the word “logos”. The Jews used the term to mean “an agent of change or creation” and the Greeks could use it to refer to something someone said that conveyed his thoughts or it could refer to the person’s philosophical principles. As it is used here it means both.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)**

When Jesus shows up on the earth He is the exact representation of God (Hebrews 1:3). He conveys God - how God is. He, in human form, **WAS** God.

There is a cult out there who believes that Jesus isn’t God. Their bible says “the word was **a** god” and basically makes Jesus like all those other gods like Zeus and Baal. This is spiritually disgusting to me. Jesus **IS** God. The Bible clearly teaches that He is.

Once a member of that cult asked me what the significance was of Jesus dying if He was really God. My reply was that there never has been among any of the man made gods one that did anything sacrificially for the people. All man-made gods are selfish since people who are intrinsically selfish made them in their own image but **OUR** God, the real God, died for us - sacrificed for us. **THAT** is **VERY** significant!

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)**

There are 3 ideas here:

**1) Jesus was there in the beginning.** (In Genesis Chapter 1 a WORD was spoken: that's Jesus at work creating.)

**2) Jesus was with God** (It doesn't just mean that the Father and Jesus were in close physical proximity; they were close in all ways. They were WITH one another. This is important because toward the end of this book we see that Jesus will be separated from the Father as He takes on and actually becomes our sin.)

**3) Jesus was God** (and He still is)

**“He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:2)**

In Genesis there is a “conference” of sorts among the Godhead: the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in which they say “Let US make man in OUR image and likeness.”

**“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:3)**

A minister I know used to say, “I looked up the word ‘all’ and it means ‘ALL!’” He was right! “All things were made through Jesus.” This is a key idea: through Him. Jesus always has been Someone **through** Whom things happen. The Holy Spirit works in Christians through Jesus, the Father works His will through Jesus and we can do things through Jesus. Which things? **ALL** things!

**“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”  
(Philippians 4:13 NASB)**

The body of Christ has this idea that we do things WITH Jesus or alongside Him or something. Have you noticed that? We ask Him to help us do things and I think we're missing out. Whenever I minister I pray and my prayer usually involves inviting Him to do whatever He wants THROUGH me.

Why can't we do this in every righteous thing we do? We can - we just don't typically do that. What sorts of righteous things am I talking about? Deep and rare things like: being a mom or dad, being a husband or wife or friend, being a nurse or a welder or a personal care person, mowing a lawn, making a bed, weeding a garden, playing with a child, choosing a book to read....a path to take...deciding what to do.



Why don't we live these things through Christ? I think it's because we don't see those things as spiritual things and we believe we can do them in our own power. I believe that when it comes to wrong ideas its like they are stacked up. One wrong idea rests on the one beneath it; that idea leads to the one under it and as you go down the stack eventually you will come to a truth - a reality that isn't practiced, that isn't believed and that is the source of that error.

A lot of "personal ministry" has to do with leading people to Jesus to help them find the source of their wrong thinking about things. That often reveals the rejection and damage that came along with the wrong ideas, that lead to them. Under these errors: not seeing everyday tasks as spiritual tasks and believing we can do all things in our own strength is a core truth that is being ignored, blurred, obscured and twisted. Guess what that is.

**"these things (in the gospel of John) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31)**

When we meld with Him, become one with Him; when we "be living" the Christ life we will instinctively do all things through Him Who is our life and will not automatically consider that we can do it better on our own.

**"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:3)**

Nothing was made without Him; apart from Him nothing was made so, I suppose, we can trust Him with everything

**"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)**

In verse 4 we see an interesting term: "In Him". "In" is an important concept because the Word says that we aren't born "in Jesus", rather we are born "in Adam" and that this is a problem because 1 Corinthians 15:22a tells us that "in Adam all die". That's a BIG problem; however, there is an antidote to that problem, "even so in Christ all shall be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22b).

We see this term in John 4:4 **"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."** **In Jesus** is what we are all scrambling in the flesh to get and failing to get in our own flesh. We want life and we instinctively search for it everywhere but **in Him** - the only place it can be found. Life - the zoe life of Jesus...God derived life was and is in Him and that life was the light of men.

God has long used light to deal with men. At night in the wilderness He used light to guide and illuminate man; now, Jesus is the light, a guide and also illumination. I've noticed that many people are somewhat allergic to that light; people don't, by and large, want to be seen. People want to be hidden away. Many of us spend our lives hiding.

Jesus illuminates.

**“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (John 1:5)**

The word “darkness” here means “dimness or obscurity”. Before we were saved we were dark, obscure, distant and vague. We know how when a light is turned on the darkness flees and we've heard a billion sermons about this. Often I have heard this verse quoted to say “the darkness did not understand the light”. Did you know that this is not what that means?

The verse says “the darkness did not comprehend it.” The Greek word translated here as “comprehend” is “katalambano”. It means to “seize or receive eagerly”. Let's look at that verse taking that into account: “the darkness did not receive Jesus eagerly.” It sounds different doesn't it? You know what? The darkness still does not receive Jesus eagerly and this includes the dark areas in our own hearts.

If Jesus really is the light (and He is) and if we haven't allowed Jesus to go into areas of our souls, into our strongholds and portions of our souls that we have not surrendered to Him, then these are, at least functionally, areas of darkness within us. When someone comes into our lives and Jesus tries to minister light through that person to the dark areas in our souls we might find ourselves covering up and withdrawing. Or, more aptly put, perhaps, drawing the curtains to keep the light out.

“The darkness did not receive Jesus eagerly”; “the darkness **does not** receive Jesus eagerly.” This is why it is so crucial that we understand that we are totally different **in Christ**, that we are **in His light** and that it is normal for us to be transparent and open to His light. It is part of our identities **in Christ**.

**“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.” (John 1:6-7)**

There was a reason for John. (There is a reason for each one of us too.) John came as a witness, as one who gives testimony and he was there to speak of the Light

(Jesus). There was a purpose for that too: **“that all through him might believe.”** This is a great case that shows how God utilizes people.

John 1:7 says that “through him” all might believe. God works through people. He will work through us if we allow Him to do it and God wanted to work through John so that people would do what the Apostle John wrote the book to achieve: that all would believe in Jesus. God worked through John the Baptizer so that all would entrust themselves to Jesus.

You know, this has always been what God has wanted: not that we be merely involved with Jesus but that we would entrust ourselves to Him, Can we do that fully if we depend on ourselves? No. Still, we try to be self sufficient.

**“He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” (John 1:8-9)**

Jesus is the true Light; Jesus literally is the embodiment of truthful illumination.

**“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.” (John 1:10)**

The word “world” is the Greek word “kosmos” and it means “orderly arrangement”. John tells us that Jesus made this orderly arrangement, visited this orderly arrangement and the orderly arrangement did not know Him. It did not perceive Him. Can you imagine how lonely and sad this made Jesus? Something that bore His mark – order – didn’t see who He was.

**“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11)**

I did a word search on “receive” and “received” in John and found that it shows up 26 times in the book. Jesus came to His own, the Jewish people, and they didn’t receive Him. This means they didn’t associate themselves with Him. This seems so sad and we tend to be upset with “those Jews” who did not receive him. The truth is that we Christians are His own, we belong to Him, yet many of us Christians do not receive Him or don’t seem to. Many of us won’t believe in Him (as in entrust themselves to Him); we spend our lives trying to protect ourselves and provide for ourselves.

Many of us won’t receive him in terms of associating with Him. By this I mean that we will hold on to other identities and not receive Him as our identity. We will remain victims or whatever and not receive Him. Therefore, when we see



ourselves we don't see ourselves in terms of Jesus. Rather, we will see ourselves in terms of our rejection, our pain, our emptiness, our shame, etc.

Then there are the many of us who will not receive Him through others. We have things arranged like we want them. We don't want someone like Jesus rocking our boat. These things happen a lot among our brethren. What does Jesus do when He is not received?

Two things: 1) He stands there....waiting and 2) He goes to where He IS received. Being omni-present Jesus can do both at the same time.

Over and over in the Word and also in face-to-face time now God sets up relationships and intends to accomplish things in those relationships. Since that is His plan for building His Kingdom the enemy attacks that, often through attempts to disrupt those relationships. More often he inserts doubts and worries that cause one or more of those most familiar with someone to not receive that one.

Jesus said that a prophet was not received, basically, in his own hometown and it also often happens in families, other intimate groups or even in "the box (the local traditional church). People from somewhere else will be brought in....strangers...to minister...while the talent and gifts in the pews are looked over. What a waste!

Someone in a marriage or a family will see something and can only see it specifically because of where they are in the relationship, God will direct them to speak to it and they will be ignored or shunned. Why? They will not be received precisely because of the closeness. It happens with friends and co-workers too

Why would I even mention this? So we will be wise and not fall for it. Let's ponder this for a minute: when we don't receive what or who God has there for us, what exactly do we miss out on? One thing is our right to the full package as His child. We often only access a portion. When we don't receive Jesus that is surely the cost but we fail to receive so many other things. Who knows what we miss out on? That seems so tragic to me.

In our fellowship we meet in our home several times a month. It is pure "church" if you will.... "ekklesia", the gathered body of Christ. So, we call them "gatherings." At a recent gathering I taught and I was talking about how in Acts 17 Paul was studying all the gods on Mars Hill. He noticed them because he was paying attention. I believe we need to live vigilant lives, paying attention, asking God what to think about what we see and discussing it in relationship with others. This brings us into a more exciting life and I think we will be less likely to miss something and we will have a better chance of receiving what God has for us.

This is why when people tell me about what is happening around them I often ask them, “what do you think Jesus wants you to do with that?” I do it so that next time, they will think to ask His opinion.

**“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11)**

He came to the Jews; they did not receive Him. Now, we’re His own and sometimes we don’t receive Him. Oh, we want His benefits and blessings - just not Him - not always. He came to the Jews and He comes to us and they refused to receive Him as we often don’t receive Him....but someone did.

**“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:” (John 1:12)**

When they received Him....associated themselves with Him...He gave them something. To them He gave the right to become children of God. True rights cannot be seized; they must be given and the right to become children of God and not just His people is a BIG DEAL. To whom did He give this right? He gave it **“to those who believe in His name”**. In other words, He gave that right to those who entrust themselves to Him.

This is important because I believe that we can be saved and still cheat ourselves out of the sensation of being God’s child.

**“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)**

We Christians were procreated - not from blood, not from a fleshly human desire to make it happen and not of the human desire of a person. We were procreated and born from God Himself. This is how Jesus was born into an earthly body and we should remember: He was the firstborn of many. We’re part of the “many”.

**“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)**

Jesus, the (logos) Word took on a physical body and dwelt among us. The Greek word translated as “dwelt” means “to encamp, to reside, to be fully living within.” In other words, He actively lived among us and I believe that today He wants to do that IN us.

They beheld His glory. They saw it - something different, something that could only have come from His heavenly Father. I believe that should we decide to allow Jesus to fully dwell in us, individually and as the Body of Christ. When we do, people will see the same thing: glory that can only come from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The “glory” spoken of here is what some people refer to as the “shekinah” glory of God. It’s the glowing glory of God that people saw in the tabernacle caused by the tangible presence of God. One could just about see God glowing through Jesus. It’s been my experience that some people who walk after the Spirit consistently do that; you can “see” Jesus in them. You can “see” that they have been with God.

I’ve noticed something among the members of the body of Christ: we tend to major on one or the other of those. Either we are full of grace and neglect the truth or we are full of truth (and somewhat harsh about it) and neglect the grace of God in and through us. I believe Jesus was balanced in this regard and so shall we be when we walk in the Spirit consistently.

John 1:14 says that Jesus was “full of grace and truth”. The word “full” means “crammed full and overflowing.” The word “grace” refers to “the free gift from God designed to equip for exactly what we will need to do” and “truth” means “real and genuine.” Jesus was and is real and genuine.

**“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” (John 1:15)**

John bore witness of Jesus. This is interesting because “bearing witness” means “to say what you know about something or someone....experientially.” It is fair to say that John, as a prophet, had had an experience with Jesus prior to this and not just because they were related physically. The context is spiritual.

John the Baptizer had been saying, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me” and he had been saying this a lot. This is a startling thing for him to say because what he says is almost blasphemous. “He who comes after me is preferred before me.” It literally means that He came first (“for He was before me”) even though Jesus was born a good while AFTER John was born. This is like Jesus saying, “before Abraham was....I AM.” It is dangerous talk. Talk like this could get a guy killed!

**“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.”  
(John 1:16)**



As a Christian who walks the earth some 2000 years later I find it delicious to consider that what I have in me spiritually comes directly from the fullness of Jesus, from the overflow out of Him, as it were. It's very personal, isn't it? "grace for grace": He got grace....to give grace. See?

The question comes, "since we have received grace, what is that for?" What are we to do with that stuff? We get.....to give. We get it to give it away...to pour it out.

**"But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all." (Philippians 2:17 NASB)**

Correspondingly, what are we tempted to do? We are tempted to hole up, to stare at the back of someone else's head in "the box" and keep what we have to ourselves. It is possible to be in a crowd and to feel like we are surrounded by a bubble - in a crowd yet insulated from people - there....but so apart, so alone. This runs completely counter to God's plan for His church, the true body of Christ. His plan is that there be an ongoing ebb and flow among and between all members, true fellowship (the Greek word for this idea is "koinonia") that involves an impartation from one to another and what is imparted as those who walk after the Spirit consistently is Jesus, in and through us.

**"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace."  
(John 1:16)**

What an image! It's one of fellowshiping with Jesus Himself, moment by moment. His grace is our grace. His patience is our patience. His peace is our peace. His mind is our mind and on and on. Grace for grace. Peace for peace. Wisdom for wisdom. Power for power! Whatever comes in our lives to usher in Jesus will always be inferior to Jesus Himself.

**"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)**

The body of Christ is divided on all sorts of things. One of these is the importance of law in the lives of Christians. Whenever I discuss this I do so from a foundational understanding what this means. When I think of the law Moses received from God, I think of it in terms of being "the Law."

The Law came, I believe, to reveal that the earth was run on a system that God would eventually supercede with a different system: grace. The original earthly

system is what I refer to as “law”. This system is alive and well on earth. We’ve all been subjected to it. The law is the reason that people will appreciate you more if you perform well. Virtually people are judged at some times in their lives to be valuable, acceptable, lovable, etc. in terms of looks, degrees, standards of living, performance. Most often we are judged to not be valuable, acceptable, loveable, etc. because we fail to measure up to some manmade set of standards.

The fact is, many of us came to Jesus through the law. We were told “do this (get saved) to get this (a slot in heaven)”. Simply put: law = doing to get. The law came first but something better came through (**through!**) Jesus. Because of law, people do something that is very troubling to me: they see Jesus as some sort of errand boy. They hang out with Him to get what He brings. Christians have often been trained to approach the Lord only in terms of getting from Him and this hurts us and it hurts the Kingdom.

Jesus is much more than our little helper. He is the WAY. He is the conduit through which it all happens. If we are going to be all He intends for us to be and accomplish all He intends for us to do we must have an ongoing involvement with and dependency upon Him. A single encounter or experience with Him will just not do.

Moses just brought the law; Jesus is the source through Whom flows grace and truth and, remember, truth means genuineness and reality. Sometimes I wonder if the reason so many Christians seem so fake and distant to non-Christians is because they don't draw real truth from Him just some true facts. Then when they run across a genuine and real Christian who lives a vibrant kind of faith, he scares people to death. What has grieved me is how many Christians are frightened by vibrant faith.

There is a term that was big in the computing world a few years ago: WYSIWYG (pronounced “wizzie-wig”). It stood for What You See Is What You Get. On the surface it looks good. You look at the outside of something and how it looks is what you get.

I don't like that term because if a person is fake he can present a false version of himself and if he can maintain that people will get a version of him that isn't real. It won't be truth. When I had reasoned through this I decided that I would be something I call WYSIWIA (pronounced “wizzie-weee-ah”). It stands for What You See Is What I Am. Even if what I am is disappointing or less than elegant – it is what I **really** am.

How can we manifest Jesus, the Truth, genuineness and reality if we practice falseness? According to John 1:17 grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. It

still is. If we aren't living lives of grace and truth then we must be quenching His Spirit that dwells in us.

**“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18)**

The term “declared Him” means that “Jesus openly considered the Father aloud”. The only true expert said what He saw; so then, Jesus was witnessing about the Father – ever the forerunner.

**“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’” (John 1:19)**

It seems that all through time, whenever someone has stuck out as one “outside the box” some institutional church guy has had to check him out. John the Baptizer was **definitely** an “out of the box” guy. “Who are you?” they asked him. John knew who he was. His father learned who John was from an angel.

**“But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.’” (Luke 1:13 NASB)**

Do you know what his name means? John means “Yahweh has been gracious.” So, when they asked John who he was, he could have truthfully said, “I am proof that God has been gracious.”

**“And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.” (Luke 1:14 NASB)**

Whenever people wait in anticipation of something, whatever ushers it in, its arrival causes people to be excited. In our little town there are parades every now and then and all the children sit there, fidgeting...impatient. What changes their impatience into excitement? The sirens of the police cars that usher in the parade!

**“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb.” (Luke 1:15 NASB)**

What an awesome concept: to be filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. This means that even in there he was God directed in an unusual way. May we all experience that where we are in our lives!



**“'And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'” (Luke 1:17 NASB)**

All this to say that I believe Zacharias told his son about his purpose and calling. John **knew** who **he** was. So when the priests and Levites sent by the Jews asked him, “Who are you?” he spoke to what they were thinking.

**“He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’” (John 1:20)**

This was a bold man. The text emphasizes that he did not deny who he was; instead, he announced that he was not the messiah. So, they asked more questions.

**“And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’” (John 1:21)**

So they ask, basically, “then who the HECK are you?” They had to give a report back in Jerusalem and they couldn’t give a report that consisted of a list of things John was not.

**“Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’ He said: ‘I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the LORD,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.’” (John 1:22-23)**

The term “crying” means “to scream in a tumultuous way”. John was making some noise and he wasn’t sophisticated about it either. This guy he was paving the way - getting people ready for Jesus. He was being himself; he was doing his part in the building of God’s Kingdom.

**“Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, ‘Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’” (John 1:24-25)**

You know, baptism was a common thing to them. When a Gentile converted to Judaism he was baptized. John, however, was calling for Jews to be baptized.

**“John answered them, saying, ‘I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know.’” (John 1:26)**

That must have been an unsettling thing to hear. “Someone among you is someone you do not know.” These men were there because the leaders of Israel were concerned that he was there doing things that might either harm the people or, more likely, would threaten their place as leaders. John tells them, “oh, something is up!” Can’t you just sense the hair standing up on their necks?

**“It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.” (John 1:27-28)**

He answers the question in a strange, yet truthful way. He is fulfilling his calling. He directs them to his true task. Part of why he said it this way was so that we could see that every day he was actively paying attention: “Is today the day I see Him?”

Imagine what our lives would be like if that was how we lived! “Is today the day I see Him?” The anticipation of seeing His hand at work is an amazing antidote to the boredom and dreariness of the lives so many of us live. Let’s seek Him!

Then the next day.....it happens! John sees Jesus and a proclamation is torn from his lips!

**“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29)**

The term “behold!” is one of both surprise and recognition and what he says is so strange: “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” All the Jews are familiar with the prophecy in Isaiah that refers to the messiah as a sheep led to slaughter and with the sheep whose death on the Day of Atonement defers the sin of the Jewish people.

Here John refers to Jesus as a lamb who literally TAKES AWAY sin and not just the sin of the Jews but of the entire “kosmos” (the whole creation). This is a HUGE deal!

**“This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” (John 1:30-31)**

Now, John knew his second cousin Jesus but he did not know Jesus was the Messiah until that day.

**“And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.’” (John 1:32)**

He saw the Holy Spirit land on Jesus and stay there. This is yet another verse that backs up the idea of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word “remained” means “dwelt, continued, abided, was present.”

**“I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’” (John 1:33)**

This is how John knew it was Jesus who was the Messiah: God told him. I pray that we will all have that kind of conversational relationship with the Father.

I was once speaking with a woman who attends a church where the people are taught that God no longer speaks to Christians except through the Bible and through only one version of the Bible at that. As providence would have it (I jest) it happens to be the only version of the Bible accepted in that church.

The problem for this woman is that God really does talk to her and she knows it's Him. So she has a problem that shouldn't exist in the body of Christ: she has to hide her vibrant abiding exciting conversational relationship from her fellow congregation members the way the closet alcoholics hide their sin. How sad!

She was so thrilled when I told her that the gift of hearing God was still available for us today and that among the group with which I associate she could freely discuss it without fear of being frowned upon. John the Baptizer could hear God like she does.

God also told John that Jesus would be doing something unusual: **“this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”** It is tragic to me that while Jesus is busy baptizing people with the Holy Spirit, in a large segment of modern day Christianity the institutional church is denying the fullness thereof. It is commonly taught that this powerful and mystical experience is not happening, that the Holy Spirit of God does not want to completely overwhelm us in a mind-boggling way and that He does not live His power out through regular ole people like you and me when they allow themselves to be yielded to Him.

Is it any wonder that the “church” seems to be dead in the water?

When John, not hobbled by such false teaching, saw God doing what He clearly said He would do to identify the Messiah, John proclaimed the truth about it.

**“And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”  
(John 1:34)**

**Father God, I ask that You speak to us however You wish, as often as You wish and that You fine-tune our abilities to hear and know what to do with what You tell us. Please increase dreams, visions, images if that is Your will. We want to be able to hear You like John the Baptizer did or, better yet, like Jesus, the Firstborn of many did and does. We are the many. Speak to us and open our ears. I pray this in the equipping name of Jesus. Amen.**

**“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’”  
(John 1:35-36)**

The word “behold” is an exclamation, almost one of surprise. It’s as if John, whenever he sees Jesus, is still stunned that this man IS the Messiah!

**“The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”  
(John 1:37)**

Two disciples of John the Baptizer heard what he said and started walking after Jesus, following Him, which is appropriate. In God’s system when one is anointed as a leader people just follow. In reality, it’s God’s hand on that person that they follow and not the person, per se. Jesus is God. They followed Him.

**“Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’” (John 1:38)**

Jesus asks them an interesting question; it’s a “get to the point” question but it has a double meaning. It can mean, “What do you want?” or it can mean (in the Greek) “What do you worship?” I believe that to Jesus both mean the same thing but they answer to the first way of taking it. They answer, “we want some information; we want to know where you are staying.”

Do you know what I think they worshipped? This is what I think Jesus heard: “we worship knowing” (basic Tree of Knowledge stuff) to which Jesus replies with His first command to them.



**“He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” (John 1:39)**

The Apostle John is describing his first meeting with Jesus. Our first meetings are always so important. Don't you remember **your** first meeting with Jesus?

**“One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.” (John 1:40)**

He was one of the disciples that left John the Baptizer and followed Jesus instead and the other was the brother of who we come later to know as Peter. One thing that speaks to me in all this is the value of real relationship. They meet Jesus because of their relationship with John the Baptizer. The first thing Andrew (later to become an apostle) does is to go to someone with who he shares relationship: his brother.

**“He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone).” (John 1:41-42)**

Guess what “Simon” literally means? It means “flat-nosed.” I would imagine he was born that way and he was named for his looks. Jesus immediately changes his name, which is a distinctly Jewish thing to do. It signifies a change. Abram becomes Abraham. “Abram” means “high father”; “Abraham” means “father of a multitude”. The change reflects a change in Abraham's role and identity. Simon (“flatnose”) becomes Cephas (or Peter) which it means “rock”.

Under the law we are identified by externals. I believe that one theme that Jesus works in the body of Christ is that we are not essentially identified by what we are on the outside. as much as we are identified in terms of what is inside us. Simon was originally named based on his physical attributes; he was renamed by His creator in terms of who he really was inside: a rock

This is so significant. Jesus sees us in terms of what we really are deep inside and not so much in terms of how we appear to be on the outside. The Word says we are righteous and blameless because we are “in Christ”. Satan accuses us and presents the things we do wrong as evidence that we are unrighteous and guilty. Often we do satan's work for him by self-condemning. There is no sense being a devil's advocate...he doesn't need our help with that.

Jesus looks at us and sees who we really are: clean, holy, righteous, blameless ....despite some of the things we do

**“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” (John 1:43)**

Can you imagine this? Some of us have had experiences with people filled with the Spirit, very powerful. You just **know** they are full of God. Imagine Jesus Himself walking up to you and telling you to follow Him. He had so much power! They just did as they were told.

**“Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.” (John 1:44)**

“Bethsaida” literally means “fishing house”. Guess what they did there? They fished! Philip, moving in relationship, told his brother.

**“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote; Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’” (John 1:45)**

“Nathanael” means “giver of God”. I think that’s a cool name. Now, Nathanael was like so many of us. Everywhere I go there is a place that is like the armpit of the area, someplace that people say, “you don’t want to live there!” Nazareth was the place like that in this area. Nathanael’s response cracks me up

**“And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’” (John 1:46a)**

In other words, Nathanael says, “Nazareth stinks!”

Now, when we try to bring someone to Jesus and they resist, what do we usually do? We try to reason them into it. We give some evangelism program or 10 reasons you need Jesus. What does Phillip do?

**“Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’” (John 1:46b)**

He says, “Come see for yourself.” I think we can do this too.

There is a man I know who has given me permission to share his story. He was completely prepared to break up with his wife. He sat with me and told me that he didn’t believe in the bible or in an active God.. He had no hope. He didn’t believe prayer accomplished anything. He was taking away all my good stuff!

Do you know what I did? I said, “let me tell you what I have seen God do” and then I spent some time telling him about some of the things I’ve seen God accomplish in hopeless situations. Basically, I did what Phillip did. I said, “Come see for yourself!”

Today that man is one of the men I pastor. He and his wife enjoy a very solid marriage, moored firmly in their faith in Jesus. We meet weekly for lunch and speak freely about what God is doing in our lives. He is one of the most fervent members of our ministry’s global prayer network. What happened? He went and he saw Jesus for himself!

I believe that when we live by trusting God for everything we show people God at work in our lives. Our lives become a silent “come and see” Jesus. Nathanael goes and has an experience with Jesus and Jesus blows his mind.

**“Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’” (John 1:47)**

Jesus knows us. I mean, He **REALLY** knows us. He knew what Nathanael was like, where it really counts, deep inside. What a compliment He pays Nathanael: “here is a man ‘in whom is no deceit!’”. That word “deceit” means “decoy, tricks, guile”. In Mike-speak, “he has no disguise.” How refreshing!

So many people live in disguises. It’s part of what we learn as teens because of how the Fall of Man affects each human. We learn to hide who we are. We develop personas. We disguise ourselves. Why do we do that? We’re afraid; we’re afraid of the scorn that comes from the world system, the law. We’re afraid of being rejected for not looking or performing well enough.

What is the antidote to fear? The antidote to fear is being able to depend on someone who can protect us: Love in Person. 1 John 4:18 tells us that “perfect love casts out fear” and Jesus is perfect love.

Nathanael is a little wiggled out at having his mail read by Jesus.

**“Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’” (John 1:48)**

The word “saw” can mean a lot more than just “to see”; it means to “perceive”. It means that He **KNEW** Nathanael. Nathanael’s response is delicious:

**“Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’” (John 1:49)**

Nathanael’s response to Jesus: “YOU’RE IT!!!!” I imagine it thrilled Jesus to see someone **that** ready to be with the Messiah.

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’” (John 1:50)**

You can almost hear Jesus chuckling through this next line. He says, “you have faith in Me because I saw you under a fig tree?” then He basically says, “you haven’t seen anything yet!”

Can’t you just see this whetting Nathanael’s appetite to see Jesus at work? I wish more of us approached Jesus like this: with hope, with joyful expectation, to see what God is going to do next. Then Jesus gives him quite an image to consider:

**“And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’” (John 1:51)**

WOW! What an image! Those men who heard Jesus say this would have heard two things:

1) Son of Man is a messianic title that comes from Daniel

**“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.” (Daniel 7:13 NASB)**

2) This image is right out of the Old Testament (Jacob’s ladder)

**“And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.’” (Genesis 28:12-13 NASB)**

Everyone knew that Jacob had lied, that he was a sinner and here was Jesus saying, “you will see what Jacob saw.” I would imagine that Nathanael thought: “If he could see it - so can I since we both are sinners.



But, when I read this I think about where Jesus is now inside all us Christians, through the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us and I think about angels rising and falling, ministering to Jesus, in me and in Whom I am and live. I think about angels rising and falling ministering to us. This is not an insane idea; listen to the writer of Hebrews speaking of angels and us:

**“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14 NASB)**

Does that not make that image that Nathanael got seem even more real? I believe Jesus is speaking to us here about some of all the riches we have in Him. I believe that if we need to, God will allow us to sense that, even see it and live it – to His glory.

**Father, thank You for this time to read and study Your word. Father, thank You for sending your Holy Spirit to teach, to minister and to lead us. Father, I ask that You make us like Nathaniel - no guile, no disguise. Father, cause us to lean totally on Your perfect love. Father, help us to be transparent. Father, help us to receive those ministering spirits as they come rising and falling to minister to Jesus in us and us in Him. Father, I ask again, that You loose all of us from the fear that causes us to don disguises. Birth in each of us Your perfect love. Fill us with Your Spirit to the renewing of our minds and hearts. We thank you Father. In the wonderful and powerful name of Jesus, the Son of Man. Amen.**

## CHAPTER TWO

**Father God, in the name of Jesus we thank You for this time. Thank You for everyday miracles. Father, we ask that You use this study to increase our faith, to increase our trust in You, to increase our knowledge of YOU. Father, we ask that You spill out Your Holy Spirit on us as we open Your Word. Pour out Your Spirit on us to receive, to minister, to teach. Father show us Your way, Your wisdom. Father, be our focus and manage the distractions of everyday life. Soften our hearts to receive. Change our lives Lord. In Jesus name. Amen.**

A few years ago the Lord made a Spirit move and it affected a lot of people. There were plenty of names for what happened. As always, some in the body of Christ had a problem with it because God had the audacity to do things that they were not used to seeing and in the midst of the controversy one man pointed out that Jesus loves a party.

**“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.” (John 2:1)**

We're about to see the first recorded miracle Jesus performed in His three year earthly ministry and it happens at a wedding feast – a party!.

**“Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” (John 2:2)**

It is good to invite Jesus to things. A few years ago my wife Laurie and I were at a church in West Texas. As the praise service began she “saw” in the Spirit that Jesus was hovering over the building. She took that to be a good sign and then she asked Him, “Why are You out there?” His response grieved Laurie: “I'm not welcome in there.”

I believe that happens a lot. People, even in the “name of Jesus”, live and do spiritual things but do not welcome Him. Let's welcome Jesus in everything we do!

Jesus WAS invited to the wedding recorded in John 2:

**“And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’” (John 2:3)**

It was a big deal for a host to run out of wine; it had a lot of potential to embarrass them. While it's not the end of the world, I believe that Jesus is sensitive to such things. His mother knew that but there is no indication that she intended that He do anything about it. She merely said, "They have no wine." But Jesus (I love that phrase) responded:

**"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.'" (John 2:4)**

Perhaps something in her tone told Jesus that she expected something to be done. Jesus, though, was concerned with the Father's timing and it wasn't time for Him to start miracles. Yet, He did something anyway.

**"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'" (John 2:5)**

And you know what? They did! It's always a good idea to do whatever Jesus says to do. We should try it more often; in fact, let's make it habitual!

**"Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece." (John 2:6)**

Jesus seems to always work with what is at hand. I've been thinking that we spend a lot of time waiting. Now, if it is waiting on Him, that's a good deal because "waiting on Jesus" means "trusting in Jesus"; but the waiting I'm talking about has more to do with waiting until everything is just right before we will engage with Jesus. I think we often miss what God has for us because we're "waiting" for perfection.

I had an image once about spiritual giftings and the Light. If we are a prism and if His light is to flow through us, the gifts are like the prism's colors of light that flow out. We can live something like this: as soon as we see the rainbow of light coming out of us we can place ourselves where the light can shine through us. Meanwhile, Jesus is there and He uses what is at hand - like He did at the wedding feast. He used water in the form it was in and fully intended to transform it into something better,

**"Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim." (John 2:7)**

We are always on the brink of being transformed. What makes the waterpots waterpots?

They were called that because that was what was in them: water. They were full - but not filled. They were like we are. We have lots of *something* in us but we're not filled all the time. Jesus said, "fill them". That word "fill" means to "fill entirely". Why did He say that? I believe it was so that these containers could fully realize their potential. (They were about to become wine carafes.)

**"And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it." (John 2:8)**

What did Jesus do that we would have been able to see? Nothing but that water was already different. They took it to an expert to taste to see what was different. Sometimes - often, it seems - its almost like Jesus is doing nothing. You know? We can't discern any movement. I believe that often when we think He is doing nothing to address our concerns -He already has. We just don't know it.

**"When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!'" (John 2:9-10)**

What did the master of the feast say? He said that "every man" did something, but "the bridegroom" did something different. The fact is, Jesus, the bridegroom, is different. He's not like "every man". The truth is that "every man" puts his best foot forward at first then lowers the quality as time goes on. In contrast, with Jesus, things improve as He works with us. Still, we often find ourselves disappointed with how things are with Him at times. We need to learn to better accept His timing.

**"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:11)**

The Greek word translated here as "manifested" means "made apparent". His glory simply is. Everything about Him....simply is but not all of it has been made manifest yet. So, He is....as He is and its our pleasure to see it as it unfolds for us.

Back when He walked the earth in His physical body His glory was seen and it had an effect on people. They believed in Him. They entrusted themselves to Him. They had real abiding faith in Him. They were "be living" in Him.



**“After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.”  
(John 2:12)**

There are many people who believe that Mary remained a virgin after Jesus' birth but this verse and others show simply that He had siblings (1/2 brothers since His Father was Father God.) Jesus hits the ground running in Capernaum which is basically His base of operations.

**“Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.”  
(John 2:13-14)**

Jesus was ticked when He saw this! The priests were doing business and were ripping off the people, to boot. God had instituted the Old Testament tithe to make sure the priesthood had all they needed but they were greedy. At the time Jesus was there they had a business in God's house buying the best animals the people had that they brought as sacrifices. They would tell the people that their best was inferior and would buy the animals from them, giving them a bad price.

They would pay with money which had to be changed to a different kind of money so they could use it to buy a “more suitable” animal for sacrifice. Then they would cheat the people again, giving them a bad exchange for their money which they would use to buy the very same animals back for sacrifice but at an inflated sales price.

By cheating them in the prices of the bought and sold animals and in the bad money exchange rate, they were stealing from the people they were to shepherd. If you ever want to see God's opinion of that, watch Jesus, acting under the direct order of the Father as He dealt with it:

**“When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!’” (John 2:15-16)**

Some Bible scholars say that this took over 2-3 hours to accomplish because it was a HUGE area. Those with Him were impressed with this but, heh heh, there is no indication that they joined in to help!

**“Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’” (John 2:17)**

This comes from Psalm 69:9 (“**For zeal for Thy house has consumed me...**”) but that is not the whole verse.

**“For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me.” (Psalm 69:9 NASB)**

It’s very sobering, isn’t it? This was a very serious thing for Jesus.

**“So the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?’” (John 2:18)**

The Jewish leaders want to know what right He has to do this and it occurs to me that any righteous Jew had the right to clean away that foul stuff. Until that day none had the boldness to do so. Jesus, who is always thinking of the more important thing, gives His first prophecy of His death.

**“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” (John 2:19)**

The Jewish leaders don’t get it; always earthbound, they respond pretty much like you or I might respond if we were there. After all, how many people had been raised from the dead so far? Zero!

**“Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’” (John 2:20)**

Nor did they have the teaching on our bodies being the temple yet.

**“But He was speaking of the temple of His body.” (John 2:21)**

Then John shows us the effect of a Word spoken by Jesus (when people listen anyway). Later, when it comes to pass, they will be able to put it together

**“Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.” (John 2:22)**

When they heard and remembered the Word they believed. They “be living”. They lived lives entrusted to Jesus.

**“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” (John 2:23-25)**

The words “believed” in verse 23 and “commit” in verse 24 are the same word. So, they entrusted themselves to Him but He did not entrust Himself to them. It seems to me that they were both practicing good stewardship.

Let’s look at verse 24 again:

**“But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,” (John 2:24)**

This is interesting. What does Jesus need? He needs **nothing!** This means that He didn't need men to witness of Him in order for people to believe in Him. Why, then, are we to be witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, etc.?(Acts 1:7-8)

I believe it is because it benefits us and other people if we do that. How can I witness for Jesus and say what I have seen Him do without first thinking about what He has done? It is good for me to do that. It helps to build my faith.

**Thank You Father for giving us Jesus! Thank You for this study that brings each of us more freedom in You as we meditate on Your Word. Thank You, Jesus that you take us just the way we are and mold us and transform us into something better. I invite You to work in each of us and give us the boldness we need to allow You to have Your perfect way in us. May we become wholly sanctified in You. A Holy Temple not made with human hands, but through Your transforming power. In Jesus’ name. Amen.**

## CHAPTER THREE

**Father God, in the name of Jesus we thank You for the Word. We thank You for giving the Word through the Holy Spirit and for giving us the Holy Spirit to speak to us moment by moment. We ask You to do that now. Speak to us. Change our lives Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

**“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” (John 3:1)**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of a strict conservative religious sect. For years the Sadducees and the Pharisees fought for control of the priesthood and were in control when Jesus was on the earth. He was also a “ruler of the Jews” which meant that he sat on the Sanhedrin. It was a 71 member ruling board like a supreme court, if you will. This is the group that will eventually rule that Jesus must die.

This Pharisee, though, is different. His will be one of few voices that will argue that this would be wrong to do. He really sticks out in this group and is, I think, a model for how a person can disagree with the majority and still maintain his integrity.

Nicodemus is an interesting name. It means “victorious among his people.” It also has a second meaning that is VERY interesting in light of what will eventually happen to Jesus: “innocent of blood”.

This would tie in where Nicodemus defends Jesus (John 7:50-52) and when he and Joseph took the body of Jesus off the cross. His actions in his life fit with his name. I wonder if it was a prophetic act when his parents named Him.

Let's think about this. This man had risen in the ranks of the foul Pharisees. God says that He has us where He wants us (Acts 17:26-27.) This man stood up to the plans of the other Pharisees when he defended Jesus. There is ALWAYS a remnant and his name makes me think that it's good to pray before we name things.

Considering that name again: “innocent of blood” something else occurs to me. Prior to being saved we were all guilty. We've all heard, rightly, that each one of us individually put Jesus on the Cross. Now, in Jesus, we are all innocent of blood. Isn't that wonderful?



**“This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’” (John 3:2)**

He comes to Jesus by night and there are several theories as to why he did that. Some think he was skulking around, afraid to be seen but obviously some of Jesus' disciples saw and heard him. Many believe, and I do too, that he came at night to get Jesus' undivided attention since during days He was usually surrounded by crowds.

He came by night and then he speaks: **“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”** There is a lot in this sentence.

First, he gives Jesus a title: rabbi. It can be translated as “my master” and this refers to His ability to teach with significant impact. Then he says “we know”; apparently there were others among the Pharisees and maybe the Sanhedrin as well that acknowledged Jesus. Then he says this: **“we know that You are a teacher come from God.”** This is very important because many of Nicodemus's contemporaries were saying that the power Jesus had came from the devil. This man, however, recognizes God's hand here.

Every now and then a man or woman will manifest spiritual power and someone might recognize that. Some people are just gifted with the ability to discern the source of power (1 Corinthians 12:10). It's kind of cool to have someone tell you that they think what you have or can do comes from God and its disappointing when someone does not recognize or tap it. My thinking on this is that if what you have or can do has come from God, **it's from God** whether or not anyone ever labels it correctly or acknowledges it or taps it. So, enjoy it and be ready to use it as directed by the Father.

I don't believe that Jesus was relieved that Nicodemus recognized His source but it **did** tell Jesus something about Nicodemus. He could tell that here was a man who knew God's hand at work when he saw it. This guy was teachable.

He also was a humble man; he knew that without God man could do nothing. Jesus responds but does not acknowledge what Nicodemus has said to Him about the source of His abilities. Isn't that curious?

Apparently the Father told Him to go for it:

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”  
(John 3:3)**

The Greek word translated here as “answered” doesn’t mean that He “replied.” It means that He simply spoke where one expected Him to speak and Jesus went into what interested Him and what He thought this man needed to hear.

One thing worth noting is that “kingdom of God” wasn’t a term that was used a lot then. Wayyyyyyyyyyyyyyy back in the Old Testament God tried to establish His kingdom but the people rejected Him as king; they wanted a human king (like everyone else had):

**“And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also. Now then, listen to their voice...’” (1 Samuel 8:7-9a NASB)**

My experience is that God often grants us our hearts’ desires. He offered the Israelites the ultimate King: Himself. They rejected that offer and received a man to be king instead. He gave them what they wanted. His will remained that His kingdom would be established and when all manmade things failed...Jesus came to usher in that kingdom.

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”  
(John 3:3)**

There is always a way that one must go about to be a part of a kingdom. To even “see” this one mentioned by Jesus one must be born again.

We live in a world full of conflict. I’m not talking about human wars; those are just physical pictures of the unseen wars around us. I’m referring to spiritual wars and also wars within people that all exist for one purpose: to advance one kingdom or another.

There are really just two kingdoms: God’s kingdom and the other side’s kingdom.

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”  
(John 3:3)**

We were born into one kingdom...an earthly one. The system on which this kingdom is established is known as the “law.” So we were born into an earthly kingdom that is established on and run by law (the system of doing to get) and that takes advantage of a human weakness: the flesh.

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”  
(John 3:3)**

If we even hope to “see” the Kingdom of God we **must** be born again. Can you see why there is so much resistance to any questions about how one is saved (born again)?

I did a quick survey once of all the verses concerning the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven and it showed that 75% of them have to do with some manifestation of spiritual power. Nicodemus mentions this when he mentions “these signs” in John 3:2 and Jesus was basically saying, “without being born again it ain’t happening.”

**“unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** Being born again literally means to be “regenerated again” or “regenerated from above”. It must have been quite a shock for Nicodemus to hear Jesus say this. For one, who expects something like this? For another - its a weird idea, considering that no one had been born again up to this time. We can see that Nicodemus is a literal thinker.

**“Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’”  
(John 3:4)**

Ya gotta love him but Jesus is thinking wayyyyyyyyyyyyyyy outside the box - not for Jesus but way out of the box for us. Jesus is 100% spiritually alive and 100% spiritually aware. He moves freely in an awareness of things spiritual and, at that time, is also 100% physically alive and aware. Totally free.

So, when He speaks He sees it all clearly but we're earthbound. In a symbolic sense, Nicodemus is us, in 2 ways:

- 1) We are learning to not be earthbound, learning to live, think and respond spiritually while living in a physical world. Our first nature was to be all physical and 0% spiritual. We knew how to survive that way to some degree and we're, hopefully, unlearning it.
- 2) We are, in Christ, **now** like Nicodemus. Remember: his name means "innocent of blood". In Acts Paul says something curious that is true of us as well

**"Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men..." (Acts 20:26 NASB)**

Even though he had actually helped to kill people, He could say that because his situation was the same as ours: we have been pardoned through Jesus' death. Therefore, our situation is as Nicodemus's name says about him; we are innocent of blood. Isn't that cool? Like Nicodemus, though, we tend to approach spiritual issues with earthly logic.

**"Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?'" (John 3:4)**

Jesus opens a new door for him.

**"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" (John 3:5)**

Jesus ups the ante here. Earlier He said we couldn't even see (understand) the kingdom of God if we were not born again. Here He says that one cannot enter if he isn't born of water and Spirit. People who have disagreed on this verse have, over time, created huge fractures in the body of Christ.

Dinky definitions of bible ideas have often been used to divide the body of Christ. Debates on this verse have revolved around how a person gets into the kingdom of heaven in terms of salvation. However, the Greek word translated in verse 5 as "enter" doesn't only mean to "just get in"; rather, it means to "move about freely and exert influence in whatever you have entered." Therefore, it means a lot more than the debates would have us believe.

Most often I hear people quoting this verse to talk about how a person gets into heaven when they die and I think, "Man! That's just the tip of the iceberg!"



The kingdom of heaven exists now and not just in heaven; it is worked out on the earth in and among people yielded to the King of that kingdom: Jesus.

**“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”  
(John 3:5)**

One commentary I’ve read says that there is no “and” in the original Greek so, its more like “born of water/Spirit” to the Greek speaker who heard it. There are, then, debates in which some say the “water” refers to the water that flows when a baby is born and some say it refers to baptism in water. If the two are separate I tend to think it is the first of those two but personally I think it has to do with a physical birth followed by a Spirit birth (through salvation).

**“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)**

Jesus is drawing a line separating the two. Why? I think that it is so He can draw us into one: the Spirit and this is so that as we live the remainder of our lives on the earth we can do it as powerful spiritual beings, citizens of the kingdom of God. We can live it out powered by His Holy Spirit and not as mere earthly humans doing some spiritual exercises a few times a week.

I recently spoke at a gathering in our home and my teaching came out of a favorite passage in Acts 17 in which Paul says that God does not dwell in temples made by human hands. I take it to mean that God does not actively live and move about freely in anything that is a human construct since that's what all the words in that passage mean. Paul says, basically that “God does not actively live and move about freely in anything that is a human construct.”

**“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)**

Jesus was attempting to get Nicodemus to see reality in a new way - through spiritual eyes.

One task of the process of sanctification is the shifting of emphasis from the physical as the primary realm in which we live so that we can live out of the spiritual realm, drawing life and power and wisdom and peace, etc. from God Himself through His Spirit Who indwells all believers. As that Spirit life pours forth it colors, even characterizes fully, who we are and how we live in the physical realm to which we are assigned for such a short period of time.

I often ask people, “Which lasts longer, physical life or eternal spiritual life?” The answer, of course is the latter. So, I wonder why we spend **so** much energy, grief, effort and focus on that which passes so quickly? Why do we focus so much on things that can never give true, lasting satisfaction? So many of us, and I include myself here at times, are sadly earthbound.

Jesus came to set the captives free. (That’s us)

Jesus is jumpstarting Nicodemus' heart and our hearts when we are reborn. It is a birth through and by the Spirit and happens in our spirits. His plan, I believe with all my heart, is that we allow that to captivate our entire selves to spill through the soul...transforming it so our thoughts are the thoughts of Jesus, so our emotions are the emotions of Jesus, so our decisions are the decisions of Jesus and so our actions look like Him in us - here and now.

**“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”  
(John 3:7)**

Why did He say that? Most likely Nicodemus had one of those looks on his face, a marvel look. If you have ever said something to someone like that...something from the Lord, you know what I mean. You got one of **those** looks back.

Once I was ministering to an influential person somewhere. He was one of those people who never showed anything that was going on inside him - a real power face guy. I always ask for the Holy Spirit to minister through me and the Spirit read this guy’s mail. Being fairly new to that kind of ministry I just blurted out what I was “seeing” in the Spirit and he gave me that look – the “marvel” look. Then he burst into tears, maybe the first tears he had shed in years and years. An encounter with God through a yielded Christian freaked him out.

God seems to often do this when people are at a crossroads in their lives. I think it is a wakeup call. In my experience it has always resulted in one of two things. Either the person repents and throws himself into the arms of the Lord and allows the Lord to work His will in his life or he doesn’t. Some people, at this point, take a dive into the deep end of the pool of sin into which they have been dipping their toe.

I’ve come to believe, through what I have seen so far, that it is rare for an encounter with Jesus have no effect on a person. Either the person throws himself or herself into His arms...into His will...or flings himself or herself AWAY from Jesus. The former is the way of life; the latter is the way of flesh, sin, pain, emptiness and death (and a host of other bad things). The worst, to me, is those

who are so hardened that an encounter with Jesus seems to have no effect on them at all.

I think Nicodemus had that kind of look on his face that day. Then Jesus used a physical thing as an example of a spiritual reality, a common teaching tool for Jesus.

**“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)**

There is so much meaning in this verse. The word “wind” in the Greek is “pneuma”; it’s often translated as “spirit”. (In fact, in the verse directly before this one “spirit” = “pneuma”.) I believe it is translated as “wind” here because it is a valid translation of the Greek word that describes how the Holy Spirit moves: like the breeze, directed by the Father. One cannot see His origin nor where He is going but you **feel** the presence of the wind and can use it or be affected by it. So it is with the Holy Spirit of God.

We humans want all the answers and I do think it is wise to try to know what we can. But, really, it seems to me that the real payoff in an experiential way to a here and now faith (trust) relationship with God comes through the ability to experience Him moment by moment like we do the wind.

**“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)**

The Greek word translated here as “wishes” can be translated as “determines to be, wants to be, or is disposed to going.” In other words, as a bookworm is disposed to go to bookstores and libraries the Holy Spirit tends to go to the places He enjoys being, places that go with who He is. That’s why, I believe, we often sense His presence when we are in worship and praise. He likes places like that. In reality, where there is Spirit-led praise He’s the one causing the experience anyway.

So Jesus describes how the Spirit is and then He says something startling: **“So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”** In other words He is saying, **“People can be like that.”**

Jesus was laying the groundwork for something new. The system in place was the earthly kingdom, established in law (a system of achieving and getting by doing, i.e. works) and powered by human flesh-power. He was going to offer an

alternative that would eventually be the only system left, for eternity: the heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of God. This would be a system established in grace, a system based on what God has given and done and our works would be a celebration of that and powered by the Holy Spirit of God.

Nicodemus is like we were before being born again but eventually he did things that showed that he was breaking free. We have been freed in Christ to live as citizens of whichever kingdom we choose.

**“Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘how can these things be?’”  
(John 3:9)**

Nicodemus has a teachable spirit. He really wants to know and that’s a good quality to have. In fact, I believe that all Christians must have one in order to grow and to come closer to fully realizing our destinies in Christ. We cannot learn if we think we know it all; we **have** to be teachable which is intrinsically linked with humility, the antidote of pride.

**“Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’”  
(John 3:9)**

He is ready to learn and Jesus rebukes him!

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?’” (John 3:10)**

Why was Jesus able to say this? Why should Nicodemus know these things? He should because the Old Testament has all sorts of teachings on the Spirit in it.

**“Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field And the fertile field is considered as a forest..” (Isaiah 32:15 NASB)**

**“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances..” (Ezekiel 36:25-27 NASB)**



**“And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29 NASB)**

Why didn't Nicodemus pick up on these verses and apply them to what Jesus was saying? He was earthbound!

**“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.’”  
(John 3:10-11)**

This is a powerful statement. Who is the “We” that He speaks of? It is what we call the Godhead, the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit speaking through Jesus here, but also through all the prophets.

Jesus said, **“We speak what We know...”** Awesome! All Christians, to some degree, can do that but we need to let Him show us. And then we must have the boldness to speak what we know and testify (speak as witnesses about what we have personally experienced) about what we have seen.

Jesus tells Nicodemus, **“you do not receive Our witness.”** He is speaking to Nicodemus personally there as well as Nicodemus as a representative of the leaders of Israel who over the years killed prophets and ignored God through them. He says, “you do not receive our witness”. We can all connect with what Jesus is saying here; all we have to do is tell others of what God has done in our lives and most will not receive it. They won't absorb it, seize it and make it their own. Why? They are earthbound!

We can just about hear the passion in Jesus' voice here

**“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:12)**

The heavenly is **always** more important to Jesus!

Now, here is an interesting statement:

**“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13)**

Jesus is speaking of Himself here but when He is speaking in John 3, where is He? It is before the crucifixion, so he's with them on the earth. My point is that it seems that the tenses and timing are all wrong.

**“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13)**

He hasn't ascended to heaven yet; that happens in Acts Chapter 1. And He isn't in heaven; He is on the earth. What's up with that? Jesus is speaking from the perspective of a God who isn't time bound – even while living on the earth. From His eternal perspective all time is simultaneous. So, while He is standing there on the earth He is also in heaven before and after coming to the earth (from our earthly perspective) and He has also ascended (from our earthly perspective). In other words (I love this) Jesus is **WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAYYYYYYY** outside the box because He created the box we know as “time.”

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” (John 3:14)**

In Numbers 21 Moses raises a serpent on a pole as a cure for the effects of man's disobedience.

**“And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. So the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us.’ And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live.’ And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.”**  
**(Numbers 21:6 -9 NASB)**

Jesus knew that in time He would be raised up on a pole taking the place of sin introduced into the world by a serpent and would be the cure for man's sin and the effects of man's sin.

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” (John 3:14)**

Jesus is prophesying about Himself and He uses a term, Son of Man, that Ezekiel used to describe himself. The power in which both moved was the same: the Spirit of God.

**“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:14)**

Jesus knew He would be “lifted up” - for a purpose:

**“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:15)**

All the flesh we see in ourselves and in others is an attempt in ourselves and in others to bring life to ourselves...on our own terms. Why do we do this? Because we **hate** the death that is in ourselves. We want life but the way we go after it gives us false life which increases the death we have in ourselves and in our lives.

**“There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (Proverb 14:12 NASB)**

God's plan is that when Jesus is lifted up, and there are myriads of ways that can happen for us experientially, we would have a chance to believe in Him and believing in Him will cause us to not perish...but have eternal life. But, let's remember that “believing in” can literally mean “be living in.” It's much more than mere mental agreement in something or with someone. It means to be so sold out to what we mentally agree with that we live in accordance to it, in such a way that we identify with it, that we become like it, that we “be living” it. If we “be living” in Jesus we will not perish - we will not be utterly destroyed; rather, we will have eternal life.

Eternal is an interesting word, one which we have watered down considerably. It isn't just a time word and even if it were, it wouldn't mean that it starts when we die. Eternal is a four dimensional word. It means BIG...WIDE....ENDLESS.... HUGE. Let's read it like that: “believing in Him will cause us to not perish...but have eternal (HUGE) life.” It sounds different doesn't it?

Let's try it like this: “believing in Him will cause us to not perish...but have eternal (HUGE, ENDLESS, COMPLETELY FULFILLING) life” and life is ZOE, God-derived, heavenly (as opposed to earthly) life. When we see all that this means, and I believe we are just scratching the surface here, we will live differently.

The next verse seems to mean more than we are used to hearing.

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)**

God gave a one-only (only begotten) gift for a purpose: that whoever would be living in Him (as opposed to living in the flesh) would not be destroyed....not be dead...but would have zoe everlasting.

**“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (John 3:17)**

Why does He say this? Well, its simple. Every person who was ever born (except for Jesus) or will be born is condemned to eternity in hell. Jesus doesn't have to condemn us because the sentence of death is already on us when we sin that first time.

**“For the wages (the payoff) of sin is death,” (Romans 6:23a NASB)**

Jesus came to offer a way out of eternal death: “but that the world through Him might be saved.” The word “through” is the Greek word “dia”; it means a “channel”. There is only one way to eternal life and, therefore, to the Father and that is **through** Jesus. This is why no one is attacking Buddhists, New Agers, Pagans, Taoists, etc.; no one can get to life through them - only through Jesus and the enemy hates that.

Nicodemus was teachable and Jesus was teaching.

**“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:17-18)**

I'm not sure what I would think if I were Nicodemus and Jesus said that to me. When someone presented this idea to me in 1985, I thought, “I don't believe in Jesus but this means this friend trying to lead me to Jesus is saying I am condemned to hell and either he is right or he is wrong.” If he was wrong - no problem but if he was right and he was that meant that I **was** dead and condemned to staying dead forever. **PROBLEM!!!!** I had a problem and my friend was trying to get me to see my own death so my problem could be fixed.



It seems to me that most good ministry has those elements in it. If we are ministering Jesus we will be ministering life and that life should expose the mechanisms of death at work in the lives of those to which we are ministering. And that is never fun either for the one ministering in the Spirit or the one receiving ministry. It should never be taken lightly, because we are, quite literally and in an eternal sense, dealing with matters of life and death.

Once when visiting my pastor in East Texas, I went as one who wants to be teachable and changeable by God through whomever He wishes to use. I was prepared for the Lord to manifest life and expose death in me through whomever He wanted. If there was some belief or practice that I knowingly or unknowingly used to try to get life in the power of my flesh I would have to come to a junction...a crossroads.

Either I would refuse to receive the correction and the life of Christ through that and remain in my death or I would repent, move on with the Lord and allow myself to die to that thing and be resurrected in Christ.

I could either cut and run or walk with the Lord in this thing. If I were to cut and run it wouldn't be the people I was running from - they are but channels through whom the Lord would choose to operate. Rather, I would be fleeing His hand in my life to address that thing I was practicing, that was killing me, all in the name of self generated life.

**“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19)**

John is spelling it out for us showing us how it works. This is so sad to me: loving darkness better than light but people instinctively do that in the flesh. The person we were before being saved, the old man, was like that and the new man is unlearning that way of being; it is learning, instead, to love the light.

What is the light or should I say Who is the Light? Jesus is!

Think about your own flesh. When you are making your schemes to get what you think you need all on your own, where does that happen? Does it happen out in the open where people can see it? Or does it happen deep inside, in the shadows? It happens in the hidden places. We love the darkness when we do that.

**“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19)**

In verse 19 the word “loved” is a form of the word “agape”. So, Jesus is saying that we instinctively love the darkness unconditionally. Scary, isn’t it?

**For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:20)**

In what ways can we “come to the light?” The initial way is by asking Jesus to be our Lord. For many people, this is all they think about when they talk about “coming to the light”. It’s like that guy who when asked if he told his wife he loved her said, “I told her at our wedding. That ought to hold her!”

I believe that after the initial coming to the Light there should be a daily practice of walking in the Spirit moment by moment, resisting darkness and actively living the life. This is supposed to be a lifestyle of coming to him not a single event.

There is something else to see in verse 20. The word “come” can mean “appear”. It can also mean “accompany”. Let’s look at the verse as it reads from the New King James Version and also with “come” translated as “accompany” and see how they compare.

**For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:20)**

**For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not accompany the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:20)**

It sounds different, doesn’t it? In other words if we are walking with God, we don’t care that what we do is clearly seen. In fact, we want them to be clearly seen because it shows what we have done in God. This could put a person way out of his comfort zone, because he is open to scrutiny by everyone but there is a cool boomerang effect to this.

When we live our lives in hiding we experience a lot of tension in daily life. All that goes away with transparency but it **is** true that when you are transparent people can see your stuff and that can be uncomfortable. Several points about that:

- 1) Most often it is the case that people who are transparent also walk with the Lord in an unusual way. God literally is that person's protection so they often don't care what people see.

- 2) When a transparent person is practicing something that is wrong or has a blind spot and it hurts that person and/or others, people will see it. When they say something about that thing it will be a good thing **if** the person really wants what God wants for him. It's how God brings people to repentance.

We are in Jesus, the Truth personified. We are His people; therefore we are People of the Truth. Reality is our realm. It's where we function best. So, if someone sees something happening in us and its real I think its a good thing that we are transparent and it is visible. Think about this in terms of how people interact with others typically.

Most people tend to have a mask. They don't feel like they can depend upon God to protect them or don't know He wants to or can so they use their mask. A lot of time and energy in our lives, it seems to me, is spent in wearing, switching, perfecting, presenting various masks or disguises. At the same time a lot of time and energy in our lives seem to be spent hiding, withdrawing and pulling away.

So, while God has designed the body of Christ to be interactive and participatory, we are drawn to things like movies, where no one communicates. We are drawn to drugs and drunkenness, where people withdraw while seeming to be there. I often refer to this as being AWOL (Absent Without *Leaving*). We are drawn to church styles where we can punch in and punch out and never really interact.

In these situations, as we wear our masks and disguises, hiding, withdrawing, how can God work through others to reveal to us what He wishes to address in our lives? How can He and not violate the free will He gave us to resist Him if we want to? He can't.

There is a passage of scripture I love:

**"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."  
(Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB)**

It says that **“for the joy set before Him endured the cross”**. Jesus was spiritually brave. He endured the cross for a reason: for the joy set before Him. I believe it helps when we take the time to either seek or ask the Lord to reveal what the result will be should we choose to bear the discomfort or pain. In this way, should God choose to disclose what will happen, we might know what joy we are working toward harvesting. It makes enduring the discomfort seem more reasonable.

So, in John 3 where he says this: **“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:21)** and the other verses prior to that one that also speak of transparency and we think about the discomfort we can decide if it is all worth it. Is it worth it to be uncomfortable in order to achieve what the Lord has placed before us? I think it is.

Again, if we live our lives characterized by presenting ourselves to Him to do with us as He wishes we will be cleansed as we go, sanctified, healed and restored as a process. As we move along I believe we won't mind being seen as we are.

This brings up a favorite verse of mine, a bold prayer that I recommend highly - to myself and to whoever else trusts the Lord enough to release himself or herself to Him to do as He sees fit.

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way..” (Psalm 139:23-24 NASB)**

After speaking on transparency and how the light (truth) reveals, Jesus and His disciples moved on.

**“After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification.” (John 3:22-25)**

Earlier in the Gospel of John we saw that Jesus and John were together. Now they are apart. Let's see what happens when this dispute occurs.

**“And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified; behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!’” (John 3:26)**



They try to separate them! They come to John and say, basically, “Hey! He was with you and now He's getting your business!” John's response has to do with his understanding of the concept we call surrender and Lordship. He knows that everything is from God.

**“John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.’” (John 3:27)**

John is resisting something that divides the body of Christ to this day: territoriality. I believe territoriality starts when we are young. It's when we first shouted that word all parents dread: **“MINE!”**

I worked for a huge church in Houston and while there I watched a border war break out over space. Christians fighting over people and things and saying things like: “this is MY part of the building” and “this is MY area of ministry.” Years later I attended a smaller church later and when the Lord had me step into what I'm doing now I talked with the minister of that church. He asked me, “What happens if one of MY people wants to become one of YOUR people?” My reply was, “I don't own any people...and neither do you - everything we have belongs to Jesus!”

Whenever we use energy, brain power, flesh power, time, resources to claim ownership of something...whenever we are willing to destroy something or someone to keep something just because we think it is ours, I wonder what's at work there. I suspect it's our flesh and not His Spirit at work.

John the Baptizer took this opportunity to speak about who he was not.

**“You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’” (John 3:28)**

He knew where he fit in God's plan. I think that it is a good idea to seek out and receive what His plan is for us as individuals and as a part of His body and then **be** that.

**“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” (John 3:29)**

John was seeing his whole reason for existing come to pass. How cool is that? His response: “this joy of mine is fulfilled.” The Greek word translated as “fulfilled” is “pleroo”; it means to be “filled to overflowing”. How wonderful that must have

been to experience! Joy filled to overflowing all from being able to know that what he was called to be and do was complete. I would like us all to get a taste of that on a regular basis.

**“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)**

When faced with a challenge to fight for his territory to remain the same size or even grow, John chooses to decrease. Why? Because he knows something about a dynamic we can all experience if we will only choose to decrease. Jesus, who we invited into our lives to dominate us, will increase in effect, in power, in joy, in peace, etc. if we will only decrease in our flesh.

However, if we choose to keep a death grip on what we *think* is ours, and I use the word death grip specifically because the mind set on the flesh is death (Romans 8:6), we will keep what we have and quench the Spirit of Christ Who is in us by invitation. How tragic and what a waste it is to invite Jesus into our lives to accomplish something and then willingly choose to quench that very thing!

**“He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.” (John 3:31)**

John repeats this concept: “He who comes from heaven is above all.” The Greek word translated as “above” means “higher in rank” and “more than”. We can tell if we are powered from above based on what we discuss. Are we having discussions in our heads about how to fix things on the earth so they will be our way? Are we wrestling with how to make things, circumstances and people do what we want? Or are we “from above”? Are our thoughts about what the Father wants in and through and for us?

One of the primary tasks of the sanctification process is to move from being mere earthly beings, even those who are aware of heavenly things, and to literally live as we Christians are: heavenly beings designed to live by the very power of God in us during our temporary lives on earth.

**“And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.” (John 3:32)**

People who are in the flesh from birth instinctively can only testify from what they have seen with earthly eyes. Jesus though, speaks about what He sees and hears personally. He is the best authority. So, here is this Being, Jesus...this Person, Who has seen and heard in the presence of the Godhead. He walked about the earth in His body for 33 years and now lives through the Spirit in us.

John says something else profound and really sad about what He has to say”

**“and no one receives His testimony.” (John 3:32b)**

This is still happening to this day! Now, my belief is that some **had** received. John was speaking of the majority who had not received but obviously Jesus' disciples had received Him, as had John. Then he says something else”

**“He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.”  
(John 3:33)**

When a person receives Jesus and His testimony that person just knows it is true but what John says is even more so.

**“He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.”  
(John 3:33)**

That word “certified” is interesting; it is the Greek word “sphragizo” and it means “to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation; to attest.” It’s the same word used in Ephesians 1:13 where Paul says we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. In addition to us putting our mark on it, virtually saying, “I attest that this is true”, it has to do with something being safe in there.

In other words when we receive this.....we’re going to keep it. It speaks of the security of the believer. Ain’t that grand?!?

**“For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.” (John 3:34)**

John is contrasting mere people, including himself, with Jesus. In Jesus the Spirit is limitless and guess where we Christians are? We are in Christ! If we Christians would get a grip of what it means to have the Holy Spirit of God and His power available to us we would be unstoppable. There is no limit to Him! One cannot measure an all powerful God.

We’re not used to the concept of limitless because as mere earthly beings we are limited in every way. He, though, is not. I believe that when we move along in that sanctification process and come to know Him more and more by depending upon Him more and more (basic faith) we will be more and more apt to consider that He is barely limited by anything and we will benefit more from Christ in us. Why did I say that “He is barely limited by anything”?

The one thing I can see that limits God is the very human will that He gave us. In the long run giving us the opportunity to limit His hand was His call. Whether or not we do, that is our call - moment by moment. In the long run His will **will** be done, no matter what. I want to be involved in whatever plans He has in mind for me. What about you?

**“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. placing something in one's hand has to do with authority”  
(John 3:35)**

There is a church building near where I live that is riddled with doors that all have a locked lock. I was once there with the Associate Pastor and as we walked across the church through a back hallway every 20 feet or so was another locked door. As that guy opened those doors I asked him why they were locked since some of the areas locked off didn't even have rooms off that hallway – just locked doors. His answer really bugged me: “The Pastor says to lock them.”

What was it all about? Earthly power and authority. A church secretary told me that the pastor of her church is only there for only 15 minutes before and after the two services per week. Yet he has the exalted Master Key - the only one of it's kind. She wanted to know what that was about. The truth is, someone placed that authority into his hand and when he got it he had access, the right to enter, the right to do with. Access and rights is what authority is all about.

God has given you authority, did you know that? We each hold the keys in our hands to at least one thing: our life and then some of us have authority over other things as well: families, businesses, ministries, etc.

**“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.”  
(John 3:35a)**

We are sons and daughters of God; the Father loves us and has given some things into our hands. It is important to recognize that and honor His opinion about it and move fully in the realms He has entrusted to us. These are our “spheres” of dominion.

**“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)**

Let's remember again what “believe” literally means: “be living”. He who actively lives in the Son has everlasting life. This is not specifically speaking of



salvation, though it is a part of that. “Everlasting life” literally means “perpetual zoe (God-derived) life.” I believe it has more to do with than just a **long** time.

It does last forever but it is wide too and multifaceted. It’s vibrant and all consuming. When we quench it and live in our flesh and not in dependency upon Him (in the Spirit) we just don’t get to experience all He has for us. This is designed to be an experiential life. Why did I say that? We are called to be witnesses. Acts 1:7-8 says to be **“witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”** (NASB)

To be a witness means to testify of something and it literally means “to speak of what you have seen and experienced.” When we enter into a lifestyle of dependency upon Jesus in an ever increasing way we will experience Him more and more fully.

**“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life;” (John 3:36a)**

How much life will we have? Exactly what we need. Standing in direct opposition to that is a tragic situation one in which every human is born into:

**“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)**

Not believing the Son is instinctive for the lost person but many saved people do not live actively in Jesus and the passion (wrath) of God dwells rests on these. Sometimes we wonder why we feel so miserable and often it’s because the source of power upon which we depend is our flesh, someone else’s flesh or some earthly system and it stinks.

John was preaching Spirit versus flesh in verse 36 and I challenge myself and anyone else who would receive this. The next time you feel dead inside (if there is a next time) or the next time you feel wrath rising up in and about you (if there is a next time) ask the Lord to reveal which power you are tapping: some earthly thing or Jesus.

We tap earthly things so we can control our lives but I don’t think we are supposed to control ourselves. Godly self control has to do with taking that control we have over ourselves and giving that authority to Someone who can handle it properly - Someone who has a plan: Jesus.

Many Christians find that scary; I do at times. I find it interesting that I never found it scary to give control of myself over to people or alcohol, etc. I have found

it scary when people have taken control of me but think about it: haven't we all done some of those? Have we not all given control of our lives and souls to people, things and earthly systems at times? I believe that if I were to submit to a person, like my pastor for instance, I really submit myself to Jesus as it pertains to my pastor and I take direction, oversight, teaching from him at the recommendation and guidance of Jesus.

There are some skills involved in doing this instinctively that take some learning and practice and sensitivity, like remembering to ask Jesus, listening to Him and hearing Him. It involves doing what He says consistently and learning to differentiate between His voice and leading and those of competing spirits but I know He wants us to learn this. Therefore, if we are saved and if we set out to do it He will lead us into it. It's a gradual awakening thing and quite a trip to learn. It's literally a journey. Let's take it together!

**Father God, we thank You for Your Word, for how it confronts us, corrects us, trains us in righteousness. We ask that we would know our purpose in Jesus and in that our joy would be uncontainable and then that it would make others jealous for what we have in Jesus. Speak through us so we can direct them to our Source of joy: Jesus. We lift this prayer to You to do with as You see fit. We pray this in the able name of Jesus. Amen.**

## CHAPTER FOUR

**Father God, in the name of Jesus, we ask You to open Your Word to us at this time. Reveal to us what each of us needs from these passages, which each needs individually and as Your body. We represent Your body all over the globe and we praise You for that. We ask that You limit distractions and interruptions to those You deem right and good for us to have. Release us from whatever would seek to keep us from receiving what You have for us. We pray it in the empowering name of Jesus. Amen.**

**“Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.” (John 4:1-3)**

Jesus was aware of the Father's timing. He wanted everything to happen in His Father's timing and not in the timing of people so, He moved on. He was headed north to Galilee. Most people would make a wide sweeping trek to go around Samaria. Jews hated the people of Samaria. If I remember correctly, they were Jews who married outside the faith so people who had the time would go around it but people who were in a rush would grit their teeth and go through Samaria.

The curious thing here is that Jesus was in no rush...

**“But He needed to go through Samaria.” (John 4:4)**

Apparently the need was for something other than a fast trip to Galilee. What did He have in mind? I think it was something important to Jesus; something that always has been a goal of His ministry - but ministry to whom?

In the last chapter we saw Him minister Himself to Nicodemus, a Pharisee. This man symbolizes Judaism. In this passage Jesus will meet up with a woman, a gentile, and minister the reality of Who He is to her.

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16 NASB)**

That has always been the pattern: to the Jew first...then the Greek.

**“But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.” (John 4:4-6)**

Apparently He had walked for two days. It was a hard trip and it was hot. The sixth hour is noon.

**“A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’” (John 4:7)**

I've noticed something about life: we often come to a place for a purpose but leave having experienced something else entirely. She came for a simple purpose. She came to draw water. It was her routine but she left with something else.

It makes me wonder what would happen if in our daily routine we had eyes open to see something God might do despite our routine or in addition to our routine or within our routine. I believe in an active God who practices a dynamic relationship with whomever will receive that from Him. I think life gets exciting when we live it in anticipation that in this routine God just **might** do something.

Ya never know. This lady went to draw water.

**“A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’” (John 4:7)**

This woman came to draw water. She's going to have a chance to do just that but not the kind of water she came to get. Jesus will ask for something and it will alter her day, perhaps her life.

There are two curious things of note here:

- 1) One is the timing of her trip to the well. It's noon. The women usually go to the well in the cool of the morning and the dusk time. She's dodging her peers. Satan is working his plan of separation on her and she's going with it.
- 2) The other is that scholars say that there were several wells between where she lived and this one. She could have picked another. Who knows why she picked this one? (God does.)



Here she is...separated. What does Jesus do? He draws near. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." He is a Jew, who is not supposed to talk with Samaritans (more separation) and also a man, therefore it's not proper for Him to speak to a strange woman in public (more separation). Jesus combats separation with peace, the joining together of things separated.

Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." He did this for a reason:

**"For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food."  
(John 4:8)**

They weren't there to serve Him. All thru this passage this theme is prevalent: separation and reaching out.

Her response?

**"Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4:9)**

She begins by saying, "We are different." Jesus says, "We have in common."

**"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" (John 4:10)**

I find it interesting the way Jesus refers to Himself: "the gift of God." Let's look at a few verses containing that term so that we can see something.

When speaking of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit (that flows in all Christians) Peter says to Simon the sorcerer:

**"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!'"  
(Acts 8:20 NASB)**

Peter referred to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit as "the gift of God."

**"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23 NASB)**

Paul referred to eternal life in Christ Jesus as "the gift of God."

**“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB)**

Paul referred to salvation by grace through faith as “the gift of God.”

**“And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”  
(2 Timothy 1:6 NASB)**

Paul referred to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit as “the gift of God.”

So, which is it? Or is it all four? Jesus **is** eternal life, **is** salvation, and **is** the embodiment of Holy Spirit power. Jesus **is** the “gift of God.” My question is this: since we have the Holy Spirit in us, through Jesus in us, are we not the “gift of God” when we go where we are sent to do what God sends us to do? I think we are.

I have been actively seeking God to show me those lines of relationship He has established for me where He has released grace for relationship and fellowship and I’ve taught that freely. I’ve done that for a reason: I believe this has always been God’s plan for the body of Christ.

I believe that when the Lord sets up a meeting of Christians everyone there will be God’s gift for the others. That has to do with ordained relationships like families, pastoral relationships, mentoring relationships, etc. It also has to do with impromptu meetings in restaurants or like our gatherings in which we never really know who will come.

This is why I enjoy every meeting - even the uncomfortable ones. God is there...the gift of God is there. Many reject the gift of God, some repeatedly, and the most prevalent way they do that is by rejecting it in themselves by denying Him a chance to do His work in them and through them.

**“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’” (John 4:10)**

In Matthew 13:13 Jesus told the disciples that He would give parables to thousands specifically because He knew they would not understand them. Why would Jesus teach a person in a certain way designed to keep them from understanding the teaching? I think that He was doing two main things:

- 1) His primary goal was to teach the disciples by example to prepare them for when **they** taught those multitudes.
- 2) The other was that He was leaving the teachings in the multitudes like time delay Spirit bombs. Sometime in the future the disciples, filled with the Spirit, would come along and (BAM!) what Jesus had taught would explode and bless the people.

I wonder if that isn't what Jesus is doing here. I wonder if later one day she would smack herself in the forehead and think, "I could have had living water from the Messiah Himself!"

**"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" (John 4:10)**

When Jesus said, "you would have asked Him" it literally means "you would have BEGGED Him". The Greek word translated as "living" is "zao", a form of "zoe" water, refreshing, direct from God.

Hearing this the woman goes back into her separation mode at first but then she perks up some:

**"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?'" (John 4:11)**

She's earth bound. She looks at His hands; He has no bucket. So, she asks, "so, where are ya gonna get that 'zao' water from?". She's earth bound, like we tend to be.

**"Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,'" (John 4:12-13)**

In other words, drinking mere physical water has a temporary effect.

**"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'" (John 4:14)**

Jesus is sharing a main theme of the Bible: "God and what He provides is better." This water comes from God.

Jesus is speaking to a person who shares something that all of us have suffered: soul thirst. We're all thirsty in our souls for life, for **real** (zoe) life and it amazes me how we will settle for less than real life. Why is this woman where she is at noon? She is so thirsty for soul life that she cannot bear being around one more person who will reject her. So she sneaks off to the well at noon. She doesn't want to be even thirstier than she is, so she hides. Haven't we all tried to protect ourselves like that?

Jesus will expose her personal life soon. He does things like that. This woman will have a heart for a real answer and it will slake her thirst. Many seem to hate it when Jesus does that. They prefer earthly water that satisfies temporarily.

**“but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)**

All earthly water will ever do is temporarily satisfy physical thirst but real abiding soul thirst cannot be touched by earthly water. Water from God, “zoe” water not only satisfies that thirst but it primes the pump that we all have inside us. I think that pump is in that divider between soul and spirit:

**“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit,” (Hebrews 4:12a NASB)**

When “zoe” water primes it out flows living water.

**“but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)**

Isn't that an interesting image given to us by Jesus Himself?

**“And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.’” (Revelations 21:6 NASB)**

I think that fountain is a gift.

**“but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)**



The Greek word translated as “springing” literally means “gushing and leaping.” Living water springs forth, inside us, of its own accord - without having to be drawn.

**“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’” (John 4:15)**

There! She did it! She asked! So, why didn’t He immediately give it to her? In every encounter with God there are 4 basic elements:

- 1) The Source. We know that the Source (God) is limitless
- 2) The means of communicating it. In this case the means of communicating the living water was the Son of God.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) The need. We know the need was incredible because of our vantage point. We see the whole story.

How open was the woman to receiving that which she had just asked for? The 3rd element is "receive ability". I saved it for last because it is often the missing element in ministry and, generally, this is the breakdown in God-man encounters in ministry.

In ministry the person ministering is the means and often we don't participate well usually because 1) we expect “professional ministers” to do it and 2) we feel unworthy to do it. This becomes a blockage between God and the person needing ministry.

But let’s say the person ministering was ready to rock. The remaining blockage would be that the person in need wasn’t ready to receive. There are two main reasons why people do not receive: 1) we aren't aware that our need is really that deep or 2) we know we have a need but do not feel worthy to receive.

**“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’” (John 4:15)**

She wants the living water but I don’t think she is ready to receive it yet; she doesn’t think she **needs** it. What Jesus does next leads her to her need, her thirst.

**“Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’” (John 4:16)**

Jesus has incredible living water to share but if He just pours it out it will go to waste so He will lead her to her discomfort and then give her living water. The deal is that the man she lives with isn't her husband and Jesus knows it and so does she.

**“The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’” (John 4:17)**

She admits it and Jesus proceeds to show her that He is drawing from a place *way* outside the physical.

**“for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” (John 4:18)**

The word “husbands” here doesn't exactly mean “husband” as we know it; it can also just mean “man”. So, He basically said to her, “you have had five men and this one isn't a husband either.” He read her mind and her response is interesting.

**“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.” (John 4:19)**

She knows He is getting information from somewhere non-physical (from the Spirit) then she goes back to her previous method of operation: separation.

**“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” (John 4:20)**

Even though her topic is divisive, she touches on something interesting. At one time no one worshipped God at all then they honored Him in a portable temple, the tabernacle. Then God had them make a permanent tabernacle in Jerusalem, the Temple and this is the place to which the Samaritan woman is referring - a single place in which to worship God. When they were shunned by the Jews (for doing something they knew the Jews had to shun them for doing) they started worshipping God on a famous mountain. This is the old “at least” ploy – “at least I'm doing *something* to honor God”.

Jesus does not go after her for not worshipping in Jerusalem. What He **does** do is take it to a new level: the next phase in God's plan for man's worship of God. He knows that the Temple in Jerusalem will be replaced by something better: walking talking temples of the Holy Spirit.

**“...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19 NASB)**

Jesus takes the woman to a new level, knowing that the heavenly plan has to do with scrapping the whole concept of specific earthly places of worship.

**“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.’” (John 4:21)**

This brings us to the question of “What is worship”. Is worship a program? Is it a prayer, two songs, announcements, two songs (first, third and last verse only) and so on? Is it more free form like the program I just outlined except with no programs? Or is worship a lifestyle, a way of life?

I believe that lifestyle worship has to do with worshiping all the time with our life, instead of just a couple of hours once or twice a week. It looks a lot like life, getting up in the morning, seeking the Lord, going to work and working as unto the Lord. Worship is being a yielded vessel that is willing to be used by God every day, every hour of our life, listening to His leadership. Worship is heavenly relationship.

I have a pet verse on this. The NASB translates the last word in the verse properly:

**“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1 NASB)**

In order to live worship as a lifestyle, to routinely honor God like this, to live in relationship with people and with God we must sacrifice and not just money or time or animals. We must be willing to DIE to ourselves. We must be willing to do without whatever we think we need to live and allow God to supply.

I really do not like the term “worship service” because I think its bogus to have a short time of “worship” in a Christian meeting, although I do love to praise corporately with other Christians. I believe, though, that worship is a style of living that entails being aware of what we want and what we think we need and being willing to do without it if Father says we don’t need it or that we don’t need it now. How is that for a definition?

When Jesus says this:

**“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.’” (John 4:21)**

He’s talking about a WHOLE lot more than a locale for an orchestrated religious service. He is talking about living a sacrificial lifestyle everywhere we go and all the time.

**“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” (John 4:22)**

The Samaritans were apparently doing something out there on that mountain they just weren’t sure what spiritual beings were involved. The Jews, however, knew Who they were worshipping. They knew salvation was coming through the Jews and Jesus knew that He WAS salvation.

**“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (John 4:23)**

Notice this: “But the hour is coming, and now is”. This is a big hint for her and I think for us as well. Now is the time (like the song says) to worship. When I visit congregations I hear that song used like a bell to officially start the show, but really whenever “now” is its the time to worship. If worship means what we just read: to live a certain way, a sacrificial way, now is the time to honor God by letting Him have a crack at that which He paid so dearly to own: our very lives.

The word “seeking” in verse 23 is an interesting word that is often translated as “worship”. This is because it is about a dedicated, focused endeavor. God is dedicated, is focused, on finding people who will worship Him in how they live. The word also means “strongly desires” and “requires.” The word that comes to mind when I think about it is passion.

God is passionate to draw such people to Himself. Why would that be? It’s because He designed us to live like that so that when we do the very fiber of our being sings. When we live in worship, walking consistently in the Spirit, our very molecules and atoms are in tune with His eternal purpose for us. What a song that must be to His ears!

**“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)**



To worship in spirit would be to listen to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit in us and do as He says. Truth is reality.

Another way of writing out John 4:24, then, might look like this:

**“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him (live in regards to Him in a self denying sacrificial way) must worship (live in regards to Him in a self denying sacrificial way) in spirit (listening to the Holy Spirit) and truth (living in reality).”**

Jesus is confronting beliefs that the woman at the well has and is presenting her with some startling new ideas. In learning, we can do one of two things: 1) we can take what we know and add to it and modify it or 2) when confronted with something that shows what we know to be wrong we can take what we know and totally abandon it and replace it with what God is teaching us: truth.

I find that most people tend to hold on to what we know because we trust it. The reason we say things like, “but, we have always done it that way” is that very concept of loving what we know (true or false or just flawed) so much that we won't release it. Can we really learn what God is teaching each of us now if we won't consider releasing what we think we know to be true? No, we can't.

When I was starting my first real spiritual growth spurt after being saved (may I never stop having those!) I began to listen to a tape to learn all about prayer from a teacher I had heard good things about. The teacher started like this, “here is what I know about prayer.....now. In 5 years I might discover that what I know now isn't 100% correct.”

I immediately popped the tape out of the machine. I was so indignant! I thought, “If he isn't sure this is true why do I need to hear what he thinks about prayer!?!?!?” Then I think the Holy Spirit convicted me and I put the tape back in. The teacher continued, (paraphrasing) “I hope that I never arrive. I pray that in five years God has so transformed me that I know more of His truth than I do now. I have to be prepared to be wrong about what I now believe.”

I got his point. I want to be teachable, to continually present myself to the Lord to change me. This means that I will be wrong and He will correct me. If we cannot do that, are we not in bondage to our current limited grip on all of God's truth? I hope to never be a Christian that feels that I have arrived at the full knowledge of anything that God knows about anything.

Learning, then, has to do with trusting the Teacher (God) so much that we are willing to change our thoughts completely to match His. The Bible is here to make sure that when we are learning we know that the input is coming from Him and not some other spirit. His Spirit teaching us directly or through a yielded human will never contradict what His Spirit wrote in the Bible.

We must be familiar with the “pattern of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13) so that when we are being taught by God we know it is Him doing the teaching. That's what I have been thinking about the concept of learning.

The woman at the well was hearing truth spill out of the mouth of Truth personified and He was changing her mind about some things.

**“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’”  
(John 4:25)**

And Jesus basically says “I KNOW!!!”

**“Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’” (John 4:26)**

Basically Jesus says, “I AM. Jesus said to her, “I (who speak to you) am (He.)”

**“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman;” (John 4:27)**

Yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?” I am so happy they had enough cool to not say those things.

**“The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:28-29)**

I think there is something really important here for us. The woman came to a physical well to get physical water. She came carrying something necessary for her to accomplish that: a physical waterpot. She thought she needed something of the world and came with something she needed to get that.

Many of us carry some flesh tool that we carry because we think we need it to get what we think we need of the world. Some of us carry an attitude because we think it will get us what we need. Our basic soul needs are few: love, value, purpose, acceptance and security. Some of us need love from the world so we do things, we carry a waterpot, to get love.

We were born into a system (the world) that doesn't believe God even exists, much less wants to and is able to satisfy our needs. We weren't trained from the womb on to seek love from Love Eternal Himself. As Christians, we are being re-trained. In the meantime, we have this waterpot. We cherish it; why? We think we need it to mine from the world love or value or purpose, etc.

Some of us have a waterpot that is manipulation. Some of us have a waterpot that is seduction. Some of us have a waterpot that has to do with pleasing behaviors. Some of us have a waterpot that is withdrawal. Some of us have a waterpot that is aggression. We all have waterpots and until we see no need for them we will carry them.

Jesus spoke to a woman carrying a waterpot coming to the well to get physical water and He held out the prospect that there was a **BETTER** kind of water. When she received that idea she no longer needed the waterpot because that physical water was inferior.

**“The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city,”  
(John 4:28a)**

If we don't know what we are trying to get from the world we cannot get that better thing from God. If we don't give up on what we want to get on our own we cannot get a better version of it from the Lord.

It is good to ask, “What is it you want from God?” Is it love or value? Is it Purpose, acceptance or security? What is your “water”? When we know what it is then the “waterpot” we are carrying will start to make more sense. And when we know what our “water” is we will better understand why we go to that well.

The water might be some other hungry and thirsty person or it might be a career. It might be anything. What is sure is that it will never really fulfill. When we drink of it we “will thirst again.” When we understand what our “water” is and that our “well” is unfulfilling our “waterpot” starts to be worthless.

Most ministry has to do with trying to get people to stop using their waterpots, to stop sleeping around, stop drinking, stop being jealous, etc. but if the futility of the water isn't addressed the waterpots are still important to the people. God provides better water: real love, purpose, value, security and acceptance.

**“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19 NASB)**

The Greek word translated here as “need” means “lack.” A few years ago I was confronted with that verse and I memorized it. I’ve found that all the behaviors I hated in myself (which others hated in me too!) seemed to be related to me trying to be my own provider for things I thought I lacked. In some ways I was my own well and my own waterpot and then I came to understand to some degree that I stunk as a well. I just cannot satisfy myself

We must be willing to let go of our belief that we or another person or a thing or a circumstance can truly satisfy and then God can replace that lie with His truth and then we WILL receive His water.

**“The woman then left her waterpot” (John 4:28a)**

That’s when we will leave all our waterpots.

**“The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’” (John 4:28-29)**

When someone gets real water they will simply drop their waterpot and when that happens they won’t be able to help wanting other people to know THE SOURCE: Jesus.

**“Then they went out of the city and came to Him.” (John 4:30)**

When this happens people will simply come. They are thirsty too.

The Bible teaches that Jesus, Who, always and forever was Spirit, chose to release His glory in heaven and come down to earth to walk among us - to experience life like us. Can you imagine or even get a taste of how bewildering it would be if we had to experience something like that? What would it be like to always and forever never have the limitations of humanity and then be trapped in a body and limited?

Can you get a feel for how strange that might be? It’s not just the physical aspects of that. What was it like for Him who knew no boundaries and understood what the power of God could accomplish to be surrounded by people who thought and lived as physical beings only? When we die we Christians go through the opposite process. We shed the bondage of physical life and become truly free. Hallelujah!

The other thing that occurs to me is the parallel between Jesus’ situation and ours as we grow in Christ. The unsaved, well they merely stay spiritually dead. But when we are saved we are brought alive spiritually and we start a journey that is



unique for each of us, a journey in which God brings things to us to deal with and we decide how more completely we will depend upon Him. Therefore, we grow at different rates and we learn different things. We **need** to watch Jesus.

In our text Jesus has just taken a woman from the place where she is thinking physical water and has opened her consciousness to where she is considering something infinitely bigger and better, something truly satisfying: spiritual water from the throne of God Himself. Great stuff! It's what He came here to do. Then what happens? The disciples return.

**“In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’”  
(John 4:31)**

Can you imagine how weird that must have been for Jesus? He just took someone from physical water to spiritual water and here they are pushing Him to eat physical food. See how He handles those who don't know what He knows, dealing with people who are far behind Him spiritually.

Experienced and growing Christians have a tendency to experience frustration sometimes with people who don't know what they know or can't see things with spiritual eyes yet. Sometimes, I believe, there is some grief mixed in there too. We need to watch Jesus to see how He does it. He is our example.

**“In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’”  
(John 4:31-32)**

Doesn't that sound like what He just did with the woman at the well? This is cool. He's running with these men who are somewhat advanced now, comparatively. They are His disciples. Jesus gives this awesome message, to a shady lady first and then to them. This shows that **EVERYONE** matters to Jesus.

**“But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’” (John 4:32)**

Jesus is running on something much better than earthly food. He is saying, “I have something that really gets Me going.”

**“Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’” (John 4:33)**

These guys are a trip; they ask Him a question and He basically answers with a riddle. So they turn to one another and ask themselves the same question! “Did

you bring Him some food?” “No, did you?” Isn’t that funny? It’s a new testament “Who done it!”

**“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” (John 4:34)**

Jesus kicks it up a notch: “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me.”

The Greek word translated here as “do” is a deep word. It means “to abide, to avenge, to band together, to be, to bring (forth), to cast out, to cause, to commit, to continue, to do without any delay, to fulfill, to gain, to be journeying, to observe, to ordain, to perform, to provide, to purpose, to secure, to shoot out, to spend, to take, to tarry, to work, to yield.” Phew!

We could take several hours just reading that verse in each of those ways:

**“My food is to avenge the will of Him who sent Me.”**

**“My food is to be journeying in the will of Him who sent Me.”**

Who sent Him? The Father did. Jesus was satisfied not with earthly things. His satisfaction came from knowing what His Father wanted of Him, doing it and finishing it. Jesus is our model so it is possible for us to live the same way. It is a tall order, though, yet here is something to remember:

**“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”  
(Philippians 4:13 NASB)**

If God calls us to do it we **can** do it. This is a basic for Christians. One man said it like this: “for every vision God gives He also gives provision.”

So, what is God’s will for you or me? We can look around at our circumstances and then see what God has to say about it. One of my situations is my role as dad. God made me a dad. He teaches me how to be a dad and gives the grace to be a dad. So, can I be a dad God’s way?

Yes; even though its a tall order I can do it in Christ. Outside of Christ, if I wasn’t a Christian, I could limp through it but I would never fully realize my destiny as a dad. The same thing applies if I was a Christian but did not let God live His life out through me. It would be a struggle needlessly.

**“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” (John 4:34)**

Jesus said His food was “to finish His (the Father’s) work.” The Greek word for “finish” is another rich word. It is the Greek word “telioo”; it means to “bring to full completion, to fulfill, to make perfect.”

Underscore what Jesus just said is this truth: God does have a plan and He WILL accomplish it. God is revealed to us to have three aspects, three persons, we say: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In Genesis chapter 1 the entire Godhead is portrayed as having a meeting. (I think this is portrayed this way for our benefit as I doubt that an all knowing Being has to call an actual meeting.)

The Father dispatches; He gives the vision. Jesus accomplishes the work and rules over it. The Holy Spirit provides the power and guidance and comfort in the work. When we walk in the Spirit and live like Jesus did that same thing happens through us.

**“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” (John 4:34)**

Jesus will totally complete God's plan. The question is: do we want to play our part in that? If we were to remain unsaved we keep ourselves out of the plan. If we are saved but do not walk with Him we restrict ourselves and cheat ourselves out of the thrill of doing something with God, working with Him and being utilized by Him. If we are saved and do walk in the Spirit we get to be completed as His plan for the creation is completed through us.

Jesus is about to give the disciples...and us...a picture of this from His perspective:

**“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’ Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:34-35)**

They knew that it took a while from seed planting to harvest. The first seed was planted when man was placed on the earth. The harvest, ultimately, will be on that last day. In the meanwhile, things are developing. All through history God has planted seeds, sowing into people and has been working toward the harvest.

He was saying that some people were ready. The thing is that since then, to now and beyond, until He says, “its time to roll this thing up for good”, seeds are being planted, growth is happening, individual harvests come. I think that in that verse He was simply saying, “we have work to do.”

**“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”  
(John 4:36)**

Everyone who takes part in the process will benefit. We Christians are supposed to work at this together, as a team and not as members of competing subsets of the body of Christ.

**“For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’”  
(John 4:37)**

Jesus is saying that we don’t all have the same task. I’ve seen people come to church buildings to preach and the end result is that everyone gets the message that we are all evangelists and that we need to all go knock on doors. I disagree with this (often, emotion driven) logic. Some are gifted to evangelize and some are gifted to teach. Some serve in other ways. All **can** evangelize when deputized by the Lord to do that but none is better than the other.

There is a danger inherent in what I do in the kingdom. I teach. I pastor. I minister. People tend to give more power to the people who talk the most. I don’t want that power because it comes from people and not from the Lord so I resist it.

Often when I meet someone for counseling what the person really needs is to open herself to Jesus so HE can heal her heart - so He can restore her life, fix things and empower her to participate in His plan for her life.

I always start by telling the clients about my credentials because they frequently think that is important. I, on the other hand, am not really impressed with my credentials. Then I tell them of some of the stupid things I have done - ways I messed up my own life. Then I lean forward and say this: “I do not believe that because I am the one counseling you I am in any way superior to you; therefore, I will NEVER talk down to you.” and I ask them to believe that.

There is one King: Jesus and then there are the rest of us Christians – all equal. This is why when I preach at a church building I prefer not sit on the stage before preaching. I don’t need to be on a throne.

I’m a people. I sit with the rest of the people and usually in the back. My **role** in the kingdom is shepherd, so I like to watch over the people. You can’t do that when you sit on the front row and the people are behind your head.



**“For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’”  
(John 4:37)**

All the roles are equally important.

**“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” (John 4:38)**

This is a humbling thought. Many people doing ministry seem to think that whatever happens is because of their work. Jesus tells the disciples and us that we are participating in a process. What we do is a **part** of everything He is doing.

**“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” (John 4:38)**

Someone else has tilled or planted or whatever; when we do something and God blesses it we are seeing the current state of an ever changing thing.

I was invited to preach once at a church in another state. As I gave the altar call a young man responded to what I preached and went forward and got prayer. A man I know there had spent a lot of time with the man who went forward. He leaned over and whispered to me, “good work”. He said that because the man who went forward had been touched by what I preached.

My response was that if it wasn’t for what he and his wife had done in that man’s life that I wouldn’t even know him. It was the Lord working through us all and in that man directly that did the job. It was Jesus at work through all of us.

**“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’” (John 4:39)**

We can never underestimate the power of someone testifying about what they have experienced. In this case we reaped but we got to see more than we ever could sow.

**“So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.” (John 4:40)**

There is power in telling others what we have seen God do. This is often played down in Christendom as if an experience with God didn't matter. Yet, we are literally told in Acts 1:7-8 to go out there and say what we saw.

Note that Jesus stays with those who want time with him. We see that the people who got time with Jesus were Samaritans, the outcasts of Judaism. When they urged Jesus to stay with them, He did. Any one of us who thinks he or she is too dirty, sinful, insignificant etc. for Jesus to hang with them would do well to remember this.

Jesus will stay with whoever wants Him to do so. You want Him; you got Him. He comes and goes by invitation unless it pertains to His house. For instance, Jesus did not wait for an invitation to stampede the temple and clean it out.

In verse 41 we see they believe for a much better reason than just someone else's experience. They had their **own** experience with Jesus.

**“And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” (John 4:41-42)**

Jesus is always better. It's always best to hear from Jesus personally. This is why I believe we should both emphasize Bible study and encouraging people to hear His voice personally. What He says in real time, right now, will never disagree with the principles in the Word and reading the Word, knowing that it is literally God-breathed, gives us a standard that we can use to measure what we are hearing. In this way we can be sure that it is God speaking through His Holy Spirit as opposed to our own thoughts or words given to us by other spiritual beings. (Satan can be a good mimic.)

**“Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.” (John 4:43-44)**

He chose to bypass Nazareth at this time knowing that He wouldn't be fully received there. This might be a rule of thumb for us. Since we are being restored to the image and likeness of Christ and are told to imitate Christ we should pay attention to Him in the Word to see how normal behavior in Christ looks. God calls us to do His will and sometimes doing that feels wrong to us or out of kilter yet we will be called to go places, do things, say things that Jesus would do.

Jesus rarely went somewhere in a person's life without being invited. Additionally, when someone like those in Nazareth basically uninvited Him by not receiving Him, He honored that as well. So should we. This is why I try to make it a practice of asking people if they want to hear what I think I am to say to them. I want to be invited and so I don't just barge into their lives, relationships, etc.

The key issue is “receivability.” If what we have is not received....then it doesn't matter how good it is. Now, God WILL direct us into places where we seem to be received but He knows all along that we won't be. This is His call. Sometimes, I believe, people need to see their own hearts and if that can someday lead them to repentance the pain of being rejected is worth it. We all should consider this: “Is the pain of being rejected worth it?”

This ultimately comes down to one issue: “do we love others as we love ourselves?” We will know that we do if we are willing to suffer for someone else's sake.

**“So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.” (John 4:45)**

Jesus did something at that feast: He made water into wine and not just any wine, but the highest quality wine. They remembered that. Because He did something for them they received Him later.

One thing I like about some congregations of the Lord's body is that some of them have testimony times. Recently we had a gathering at our house at which I told the story of how God provided for myself and a fellow traveler on a two week long, 3800 mile emergency driving trip. I told the story, testified about it, for several reasons:

- 1) I wanted to show my gratitude.
- 2) I wanted people to see God's hand at work.
- 3) I wanted them to have a chance to think, “He did that for them....maybe He will do that for me.”
- 4) I wanted to hear myself talking about it so I would remember to insure that next time I would receive Him because of what He did last time.

I think it is a wise thing in our quiet times to make a list in our minds of what God has done for us so that when times are hard we will think, “Maybe He will do it again.” Then we will be more apt to turn to Him ever more readily and cry out to Him. It's about relationship and that testifying stuff enhances our relationship with Him.

Recently someone who had pulled away from us called on us to help anyway. I asked him why he turned to us and not to his other friends and he said, “I remembered that you took care of me last time.” Do you see my point?

**“So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.” (John 4:45-46)**

The Greek word translated here as “sick” means really bad sick – “feeble....old man sick.”

**“When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’” (John 4:47-48)**

Jesus is a bit upset that they won’t believe unless they see signs and wonders. Jesus did miracles and wonders for a reason. Even today, when miracles and wonders are still happening, there is a purpose for that. These things are an attractant - an attention getter.

I think He is upset because they haven’t moved past that point. There are portions of the body of Christ that to this day don’t seem to think that there is any ministry happening unless some signs and wonders are visibly evident to those looking for them. Therefore, every meeting has to be a big production number.

I don’t mind those. I think that God does that at times but to me there is something delicious in being able to expect Jesus to do something just because He cares and not because He might perform splashy miracles today. There should be a point in our growth as Christians where we don’t really care if we ever see a sign or wonder (as cool and exciting as those are to witness) just because we know Jesus is there. His presence should be enough.

**“The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’” (John 4:49)**

Up to now the pattern has been for Jesus to go and do whenever called upon to do so. We tend to think “God did it this way. He will always do it that way.” We must allow God to do whatever He wishes, however He wishes. Up to this point in John Jesus would go, touch something or someone and a miracle would happen. This day, Jesus chooses to do it a different way. Why?

He’s Jesus. He can do as He pleases.



**“Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.”  
(John 4:50)**

Jesus said, “your son lives.” The Greek word translated as “lives” is “zao”. It means that he lives spiritually. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and he went his way. This is the kind of obedience we need in our own lives.

That man heard Jesus and simply obeyed Him. Why? Because “the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him.” He entrusted himself to what Jesus had said. This is a wonderful lesson for us. There are times that we just know what He wants of us. Why don’t we just do that? Why don’t we simply obey Him?

He has a multitude of ways to speak to us: through the Word, through other people and directly to us in our spirits. I say let’s give it a whirl. At the very least its an exciting way to try to live.

**“And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’” (John 4:51)**

Since the man obeyed Jesus and went, he got to hear sooner about what Jesus had done for him. There isn’t always an immediate or even evident payoff but to immediately obey is so in tune with our identities in Christ that it just fits who we are.

**“Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household.”  
(John 4:52-53)**

What the man did here is a good thing to do; it’s a faith builder.

There is something else to see here. What happened, according to verse 53, when he could see the timing? The Word says that “he himself believed, and his whole household.” Did he not believe already? Yes. He did. That’s why he came to Jesus in the first place. Then Jesus told him that his son lived and to move on and verse 50 says “So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.” He believed.

So, he believed and then he believed further and then “he himself believed, and his whole household.” What was happening in that man? His own personal belief was deepening.

Have you noticed that in the past you knew you believed in Jesus and trusted in Him but now, when you compare what you believe, and how deeply you believe there is more depth than before? Perhaps you see in yourself a more automatic response to trust Him. Does that mean that your earlier level of faith was invalid? Of course not! How, then, can we view it?

We are growing – developing and this is important since we are in relationship with people who have a deeper faith than we are and with people who have a more shallow faith, who do not see things as we do. Yet we’re developing.... journeying. Sometimes people will say to me or others “I wish I had the faith you have” and I think immediately of my heroes in the faith who leave me in the dust.

So I often say, “you DO have the faith I have!” I have incredible faith and so do you. Whose faith do we have?

**“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism...”  
(Ephesians 4:4-5 NASB)**

We all have one faith. Whose faith do we have? We have the faith of Him who dwells inside us. Faith is one of the fruit of the Spirit, right?

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23 NASB)**

This faith comes from God, through Jesus, by way of the Spirit that dwells in us. We get this incredible gift: faith. It’s so intricate, so deep - we dabble with it but hardly tap it then things happen. We use what we know of trusting God (faith) and through use, the gift opens up more and we have experientially “more faith”. But really, we have all the same faith we just become more familiar with it.

The man in John 4 had faith. He called on Jesus and Jesus told him to do something and he had faith in that. Then he dug deeper into his faith, experienced more of it and then the people met him with news of his son's healing. He asked the time and then knew it was when Jesus said he was healed. He had **more** faith. He had the same faith but now he experienced more of it.

**“This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” (John 4:54)**

**Father, Thank You for this time to learn of You. Thank You for the gift in each of us who knows You. Thank You that we are the gift of GOD for this time, this season. Increase our awareness of that Father. Increase our desire to minister that in ways You lead us. Father, I ask that You spring up in each of us as a living fountain of zoe life. Father, Thank You that we never have to thirst again. We thank You that worship is more than a meeting once a week and we ask that You draw us into that lifestyle, that sacrifice, that place of living worship. Father, give us the faith to believe You have our best in mind and heart always, no matter how it looks to us and no matter how it feels to us. Father for each of us we ask that You help us trust in Your timing, rely on Your promises, relax in Your presence and rejoice, walking in worship daily. Father, Overwhelm us with Your love. Father, we thank You for revealing Yourself to us more and more each day. We thank You that we can present our waterpots to You for living water. Thank You for replacing our water if it is resentment, attitude, anger, malice, unforgiveness, bitterness with love, security, value, purpose and acceptance in the Beloved, Jesus. Father, we ask that You pour out that Living Water of the Spirit on us freely as we worship You with our lives. Father provide and protect as only You can. Open the eyes of our understanding. Give us wisdom beyond measure. Fill us full and over flowing with Your Spirit, Your peace, Your love, Your joy, Your strength. Father, guide our every step. We lift this prayer to you as a sweet offering, Father. We pray this in Your beloved son's name. Amen.**

## CHAPTER FIVE

**Father, thank You for this time that we can come together to study Your word. It's awesome that we can come together like this, no matter where we are in the world. Thank You. We ask that You govern this time by keeping distractions to a minimum, and by opening our hearts and minds to receive whatever You have for us tonight. Be with us. Speak to us through us. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

**“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” (John 5:1)**

The exact feast isn't mentioned but there were three that required all Jewish men to be in Jerusalem, so it was one of those. The term “went up to Jerusalem” is interesting. It has two meanings:

- 1) The city itself is at a higher elevation....so they literally walked up hill to get to it.
- 2) It is the “City of David” so there is a symbolic meaning too: to go up to a more important place physically.

The story that follows is one of my favorites in John. Because of the window that God has granted me into the lives of so many I have come to understand some things about spiritual, emotional and physical healing. I've also learned it by watching my own stubbornness offset by my own willingness to be obedient and open to the Lord. After all, we are all people.

I have noticed that some people seem to rock and roll with the Lord. He leads them to a place of healing and they jump on it and participate. Others, though, don't respond that way. What we are about to see is a lesson from the Lord that has taught me a lot.

**“Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.” (John 5:2)**

“Bethesda” means “house of kindness” or “house of mercy.” It was a place on the earth.

Lately I often think about the interplay between the Old and New Testaments and the old and new covenants. The Old Testament is basically the bible up until before Jesus' birth. The New Testament is the bible starting with His birth.



The old covenant, though, is an initial agreement God had with His people, that if they performed His law, they would be ok. No one could perform it perfectly, of course (except Jesus), so it was replaced with a new covenant or agreement. The first was law; the second is based on grace. While the New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus, the old covenant is still in operation in the New Testament until something happens: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

With the occurring of these events, the old covenant passes away and the new is in place. The reason this is important to mention here is that under the old covenant geographical places on the earth were more important. For instance, the Temple in Jerusalem was where God interacted with man; whereas, under the new covenant each Christian is a walking and talking temple of God. Wherever we go, the temple of God is there. It's a key difference.

Under the old covenant there was a pool in Jerusalem where healing took place.

**“Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.” (John 5:2)**

This place was called Bethesda, the house of mercy. Some versions of the Bible name it Behsaida or Bethzatha.

**“In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.” (John 5:3)**

The word “waiting” can also mean “expecting or looking for”, so let's try to picture this in our minds. This place is a gathering place for people who need something. They are there because what they need happens there and this is something for us to think about.

Why do people go to church buildings one to 5 hours a week? Many do it because it is expected of them but some go because they think that there is something there that they need. Indeed, whenever two or more gather in the name of Jesus what they need (Jesus) **IS** there (Matthew 18:20).

Why do people come to the gatherings we have in our home? They come for the same reason. They will come because they expect to get something there that they think they need. I believe we have something to give them – something that they do need: an encouragement to depend more and more fully on Jesus.

**“In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.” (John 5:3)**

The behind the scenes truth there is this: “whatever we do we have a reason for it even if we don’t ourselves know what it is.” We’re trying to accomplish something. This multitude of people was there for a reason. They wanted something. They needed something and they knew it.

It’s important to know, since we Christians are all priests and ministers of reconciliation, that if a person does not know that he or she needs something they won’t go for it. So it follows, then, that good ministry often involves bringing a person face to face with the recognition of their need and that ain’t fun. We don’t need to drag people kicking and screaming to that place because that will impede their receiving.

The natural process is that Jesus introduces us to that for which we hunger and thirst through relationship, honesty, gentleness, integrity, etc. This amounts to involvement with Jesus directly and through those who are ministering Jesus. Sometimes that really hurts and, at the very least, will often be very uncomfortable. At the same time, though, there is deep within many if not all of us a subtle relief because when we know what is wrong we are closer to having it addressed and closer to receiving the answer, the healing.

These people at this pool knew they had problems. There was no denial there. There are times as we move through this life, if we listen to the Lord and obey Him, that we all become pools of Bethesda – places of mercy. We become places where God is poised, ready to move the waters, if you will. The problem is that we live in a fast paced world and there are many distractions.

**“In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.” (John 5:3)**

These people were not distracted; they were focused. Where was their focus? It was on the water. Remember, Jesus was just teaching a woman at a well about water but at that time He was talking about a different kind of water.

They were staring at water exactly like the water on which the woman at the well was fixated.

**“In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.” (John 5:3-4)**

I think of this scene a lot. I wonder what it was like when the wind rippled across it or when a kid threw a stone into it. Did people fall in thinking it was the angel at work?

Recently I was on an out of state trip and stayed the night at the home of a couple I pastor. That night their house became the pool of Bethesda for a couple. It was incredible to watch a supper meeting become a place of healing and ministry as God moved so subtly and smoothly. I cannot discern when the Lord started the ministry that night.

Here are these people in John 5, watching water and hoping this will be their time of healing. They are hoping the angel is stirring the water, hoping they can be the first into the water, hoping that was THEIR day. In some ways I am always excited to read this thinking that it is cool that God would do this. At the same time I am struck by some realizations.

One is that it is so limited. It only happens in one place. One person gets healed at a time. Everyone is in competition. If I get healed it's at everyone else's expense, so to speak. Isn't that weird? This is so Old Covenant. Man rejected God and that resulted in us having limited access to an unlimited God and when we limited our access to this unlimited God we limited our access to everything He had for us, including limiting our access to His unlimited power.

It's sad, isn't it when we look at it that way? But then God decided He would change all that! He decided He would return to us the right to unlimited access to Him. Jesus' time on the earth, in the New Testament but under the old covenant, is a transition time. When He approaches this man in John 5 He is challenging an old covenant deal. He is the Source of healing and will attempt to get this man's focus off the old covenant source of healing: one place...one pool...where one will be healed at a time and onto Himself instead: the new covenant personified.

**“Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.” (John 5:5)**

This man was feeble...weak and had been that way for 38 years. Who knows how old he was; we just know that he had a problem for 38 of his years. Jesus will approach him and ask him what seems to be a stupid question but really, it is a focus changing question and it touches him in a deep place.

It's a question I think we all need to consider: “what do we really want?” Most of us want the result: freedom, healing, wholeness but it seems to me that most of us do not want to **BE** freed, healed and made whole. In other words, we want instantaneous results but we don't want to experience the process. It is in the

process that we most experience Jesus and this is part of how we have relationship with Him: by walking through something together with Him.

So, Jesus asks a question.

**“When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’” (John 5:6)**

Doesn't that sound like a weird question to ask a feeble and diseased man? What strikes me about this question is that it is a simple yes or no question, yet the man doesn't answer that question. He answers another question that was NOT asked: “why have you not been healed thus far?”

**“The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’” (John 5:7)**

The man does not answer the question; instead, he gives reasons it hasn't happened so far. There are two dynamics at play in each of our lives. One is a vertical one, a line between us and God above us. The other is horizontal; it has to do with earthly things.

This man was looking at an earthly thing: water. He was thinking about earthly things like what he lacked to make him whole (someone to help him). Jesus is a heavenly thing: God in human form. The Source of healing is there and apparently something He says rips the man's focus off the earthly and draws it to Him.

**“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’” (John 5:8)**

In “ministry” I see that a lot of people are interested in techniques. We read books, go to seminars and look for the right words to say, the right things to do. We want formulas. Training is good; I do a lot of training and have had a lot of it myself but what is the focus of the training? It is to DO things? Or is it to be and if so, to be what?

Our call is to be a vessel through whom God can work.

**“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.”  
(2 Corinthians 4:7 NASB)**



When we minister more and more consistently in terms of Jesus in us and in Whom we are, people won't have an experience with us or with some formula or technique. Even in the church this is often functionally somewhat like magic at work. "Spiritual formulas" are used like a sorcerer's incantations. In contrast, people who minister in the Spirit have an experience with the Father as He works through the Son Who works through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. It's a completely different dynamic.

Jesus had no trouble at all moving in the Spirit. When that man took his focus off the water and placed it on Jesus he virtually could not help but obey Him.

**"Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath." (John 5:8-9)**

He received his healing instantaneously. That man experienced a process; it just happened REALLY fast. The process was that he stopped relying on something earthly and relied upon Jesus and was healed. That man got a taste of something that had a lasting effect on him. He got to taste a new covenant reality, under the old covenant. He was freed from the bondage of needing to be in a place - to be in a limited system.

He got a taste of Jesus to Whom we have access all the time. We no longer are limited to approaching God through one place on the planet; rather, He is right here in us through the Spirit...through faith...which is reliance upon Him.

There exists in the body of Christ a sad situation. Even though we are in a new covenant with the Lord many of us approach Him in an old covenant style. We approach God in a limited way. We might be sick, for instance, and we say, "I'll get some spiritual hitman (a noted minister) to pray for me" instead of throwing ourselves into the arms of God with the problem.

Or we might say, "I have to wait until Sunday morning and hope the pastor has an altar call; otherwise I can't get my healing" instead of throwing ourselves into the arms of God with the problem. Sometimes we say, "I know I have a problem...but I'm not ready." Are these not all earthly limitations? They are. So, are they not old covenant ideas that limit our ability to draw from God?

Let's see how the writer of Hebrews puts this:

**“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’” (Hebrews 10:16-17 NASB)**

We remember our sins and judge ourselves unworthy of coming to Him, yet He disagrees.

**“Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.” (Hebrews 10:18 NASB)**

When our sins are remitted....removed from our record by God....we no longer have to DO things to make ourselves acceptable to Him.

**“Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,” (Hebrews 10:19 NASB)**

Where is the altar we need to go to in order to be healed? Wherever we are. When can we approach that altar? Whenever we want to approach it?

**“by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,” (Hebrews 10:20 NASB)**

Jesus IS that new and living way. He is our pass to the Father

**“and since we have a great priest over the house of God,” (Hebrews 10:21 NASB)**

Jesus is the High Priest

**“let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22 NASB)**

In John 5 the man at the pool of Bethesda was freed that day. He wasn't just freed from his infirmity but also from an old covenant idea that was to be destroyed by the new covenant: that God limits healing to one place. When we practice that now we waste part of what Jesus died for us to have: unimpeded access to the Father - 24/7 - forever and ever. God is open for business all the time.

Next in John 5 the Jewish leaders will try to do something. They will try to argue the excellence of the limitations of the old covenant and attack Jesus for healing on one specific day of the week. They have no idea what Jesus is about to bring

into their world and you know what? I'm convinced that, for the most part, we have no idea either.

I do know this: if we are focused on the things that hurt us, disappoint us, fail us, seem to be impossible we might not be receptive to His answer and the puny human will is the only thing on the earth that will resist His power. He gave us the right to resist Him. Let's ask Him to fix in us that thing that causes us to trust anything more than we trust Him.

**“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’” (John 5:8)**

So many of us think about the enormity of whatever it is that we are facing. That man had 38 years of infirmity. It could have dominated his focus for the rest of his life. He abandoned that, though, and those 38 years lost their power as did the infirmity itself – instantaneously.

Where **IS** our focus? Is our focus on this stuff around us or on Jesus: the Source?

Jesus gives this man three commands: 1) get up, 2) take up, and 3) walk on and the man obeyed Him. In the same way it happens with us when we obey Him, the man benefited from His obedience.

**“And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.” (John 5:9)**

The man did it. He got up. He took up. He walked. Then John tells us something: **“And that day was the Sabbath.”** Why is that important for us to know? Remember what we discussed about old covenant versus new covenant. It is important because under the old system, that Jesus was going to fulfill, there were restrictions about what could be done on Saturday.

The Pharisees who were supposed to be there to bless the people, to care for the sheep, had a rule that you weren't supposed to “work” on the Sabbath.

**“The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’” (John 5:10)**

They are completely lacking in compassion. They don't care that his 38 years of disability are gone. What is the man's response to their indictment?

**“He answered them, ‘He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’” (John 5:11)**

The man instinctively points to the authority in Jesus and says, “He told me to do it.”

The Pharisees showed no compassion. All they cared about was their little rules. The man was lame for 38 years; they did nothing for him. Jesus, in contrast, saw him and healed him. Jesus tells him to rise up, take his bed and walk and the man obeys. The keepers of the old covenant see this, check their list of rules, see a problem and challenge him for that.

Whenever God reaches out to a person He has the capacity to do and we have a need. There is a crucial element in each event. We have a human will and can resist or receive God - whether or not Jesus commands or if He announces ‘you are healed’ it won’t be manifest if the person hasn’t received the healing. This is true even in salvation. In Acts 2:41 we are told that all who received Him were added to the body of Christ.

Now we see Pharisees getting into the act. They challenge the man for walking and carrying his bed in obedience to Jesus.

**“The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’ He answered them, ‘He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’”**  
(John 5:10-11)

The man is still responding to Jesus’ authority which had to tick the Pharisees off because they considered themselves to be the ultimate spiritual authorities there. This made them want to know whose authority superceded theirs.

**“Then they asked him, ‘Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?’ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.”**  
(John 5:12-13)

I always find it interesting that Jesus preformed this miracle and then simply melted away into the crowd.

**“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’”** (John 5:14)

The word “see” is an exclamation. To a person who could read Greek it would be more like: “see!”. It’s like a “woohoo!” Jesus says, “You have been made well”.



The Greek word translated as “well” here means “whole”. Then He tells him something interesting: “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”

I wonder how many of us receive a touch from Jesus and then do not respond in gratefulness by living a holy life. I wonder how many “worse things” come to us because our lack of gratefulness brings us to places where “worse things” can happen to us.

**“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’” (John 5:14)**

It is important for us to realize that God doesn’t **have** to do anything for us. Everything He does is a gift and is totally undeserved. The only appropriate response to that **must** be gratefulness and one big part of that gratefulness is to acknowledge what He has done by living in a way that celebrates His hand in our lives.

This is why when someone does anything for our “ministry” I send a handwritten “thank you” note. I am responding gratefully and when someone responds with gratitude to what God does through us I am blessed, not because we get something but because I can see the effect God is having on the one responding to us.

I believe that gratefulness is an often overlooked discipline in the body of Christ and that we suffer, individually and as a body, for it.

**“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.” (John 5:14-15)**

So the man, in obedience to the authorities...the Pharisees...went back and answered their question, “Jesus told me to do that.” (“Oh HIM!”)

**“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” (John 5:16)**

The word “persecuted” is a Greek word that means “pursued, pressed into, followed.” What was the big deal? What difference did it make if a man carried something in his hands on Saturday? The big deal was that it was **THEIR** little rule and not God’s.

One thing I have observed is that if we as people, in our flesh, set in place some system that gets something for us and God isn't in it, when someone challenges our fleshly system we will manifest some bad behavior. Our reaction will be worse than if we ever really were "righteously indignant" because if it were righteous indignation we would be upset on God's behalf. However, if its personal - if you infringe on MY little boundary set in MY flesh, I will manifest horribly.

Let's look at this list and see which of them show up in that little passage in John Chapter 5:

**"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these..."**  
(Galatians 5:19-21a NASB)

The verse mentions "strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, and envying." They are all there. Isn't that interesting?

The Union With Christ Conference that our ministry presents is all about this. It is designed to helped people see their own flesh so they will turn to God by walking in the Spirit (which only saved people can do).

**"For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath." (John 5:16)**

The Jewish leaders decided Jesus had to go. What is His response? Was it to attack back? No; He speaks the truth.

**"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'" (John 5:17)**

The Greek word for "working" used here means to "toil"; in other words, Jesus is saying, "My Father has been up to something all this time." Then Jesus says, "and I have been working." Jesus is saying, "WE have been up to something."

Jesus wasn't trying to freak anyone out here He was just speaking about the Father as the Father because He **is** the Father. It really bothered the Jewish leaders. Intimacy with God often does that.

**"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18)**

They went after Jesus because He was busy being Jesus. If we do the works of Jesus we can often expect to have resistance too - sometimes to the point of death. A man I respect puts it in a sobering way. He says that "if we do and say the things that Jesus did and Jesus said people will do to us and say to us what they did and what they said to Jesus." He goes on to say, "some people will love us for it, wash our feet with their tears, pour perfume over our heads and some will hate us, spit on us and kill us."

It goes with the territory. It gets tiresome at times but its understandable. How did Jesus do what He did? What was His "technique" for ministry? I submit that our only valid "technique" is the same as His was and is.

The word "kill" in verse 18 is a Greek word that doesn't just mean "kill"; it means "to destroy." They didn't want to just kill His body; they wanted to destroy all that Jesus is about. Jesus once referred to satan as their father and their father wants that: to destroy all that Jesus is about.

Why did they want to kill Him? For the same reason that many Christians are uncomfortable whenever anyone seeks intimacy with Jesus: it makes them uncomfortable whenever someone lives an intimate life with the Father. A life dependant upon Him, enjoying His intervention bothers people. They will try to "kill" Jesus in us.

We who truly seek Jesus often find ourselves in a familiar place, a place where we have to take a stand, a place where we will say, "no matter what happens I will follow the Lord". When we do we must keep in mind that this might very well cost us some human relationships. God loves these relationships between people but if they come at the cost of His intimacy with us something is wrong.

I believe that the thought from the Throne of God on this is that if we all do both of those, completely release ourselves to Him and then practice good human relationships based on that we WILL find ourselves closer with other Christians and not having to work so hard at it. We will know one another, love one another more instinctively and will hear the Father's directions regarding His body.

**"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.'"**  
**(John 5:19)**

He watched the Father do and what the Father did....Jesus did. It's like shadow dancing, if you will. If you see in the Spirit the Father doing something, trace over

it, if you will, in the natural. Copy Him. A person can learn to dance by mimicking the shadows of an expert dancer on the wall. We can learn to be who we are in Christ by following His movements.

The problem is that this is something we learn by depending upon God. Its a skill, a spiritual skill, and I believe we can only truly learn it if we practice walking in the Spirit as a lifestyle. While living on the earth in human skin Jesus gives us a peek at how He does what He does.

**“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”  
(John 5:19)**

Everything He does in the gospels and in Acts He did because He watched the Father do it. The Greek word translated as “most assuredly” is literally “amen, amen” or “trustworthy, trustworthy.” The term “I say to you” is like saying, “I lay out in a systematic way.” “The Son can do nothing of Himself”; “but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner”.

I believe the Bible teaches that there is a firing order, if you will, in the Godhead. The Father initiates an idea or action, the Son executes it and rules over it and the Holy Spirit empowers us to participate in it.

Then Jesus shares the Father’s motive for doing this:

**“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” (John 5:20)**

God’s motive is **ALWAYS** love because He **IS** love. Even when His way hurts love is the motive. The Father loves the Son.

I’ve often said that the difference between a bad thing and a really bad thing...is that it’s a really bad thing when it happens to us. Well, it’s a really good thing when it happens to us. Let’s see something *really good* that has happened to us in Christ.

**“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” (James 1:16 NASB)**

Over and over again in the Word we Christians are referred to as being “beloved. There is more:



**“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”**  
(Romans 8:14-17 NASB)

**“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”** (John 5:20)

The Father loves the Son. The same Father loves us, His other sons and daughters with the same love. As time goes on, as we walk with the Lord in the Spirit more and more consistently, we will see more of what He is doing. It will be like we will see His plans more clearly and we WILL marvel more and more constantly.

One meaning of the word “wonder” is “admire.” I’ve noticed that God gets credit for the bad things but hardly any for the good things He does. Often it’s because we simply don’t “see” it. We don’t really look for it because we weren’t taught to look for it. We were taught to stare at the world, demanding it to come across with what we wanted and thought we needed.

We were also taught to stare at ourselves, thinking we were our own saviors and lords - our own protection and supply. When would we have time and focus to see Him? We don’t have the time so we don’t focus on Him.

It’s cost us dearly.

**“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.”** (John 5:21)

To whom does He give life? He gives life to the dead. This is good news for people because Ephesians 2:1-3 points out that every human but Jesus was born (spiritually) dead.

**“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,”** (John 5:22)

The word “committed” is the Greek word “didomi”; an interesting alternative definition is “adventured”. The key thing to see here is that it reflects how

completely the Father and therefore the Son, gives something. Next the Word says why Father does this.

**“that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”  
(John 5:23)**

The principle of granted authority is in place here. When someone in authority puts someone else in place and then someone else honors **that** person they also honor the one that put him in authority. Conversely when another dishonors that person they also dishonor the one that put him in authority.

**“Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” (Romans 13:1 NASB)**

For instance, a person that becomes a parent does so because the Father put him in that place. Therefore, when a child dishonors his or her parent he is actually dishonoring God. This is also why it isn't good for a person to dishonor their pastor or teacher or any other authority in their life.

So, in John 5:23 we see that the Father gave the Son judgment so that He would receive honor for that. Since He is firstborn of many (us) He represents many who are “deputized”, if you will, to places of authority. It's good for us to remember that when we are in a place like that we really represent the King. For one, it will protect us from the prideful trap of thinking it is us that people respond to when it is God at work in us and through us.

It is also good to remember that when the Lord directs us to minister to someone and that person refuses to receive ministry from us or reject us they really reject the Father. So, that line goes both ways. If He lives His life through us and He does then what is done to us when we do things in His name is really done to the Father through us. We should pray mercy from the Lord for them. It's very humbling, isn't it?

**“that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”  
(John 5:23)**

One interesting thing in John 5:23 is that the word “sent” is a Greek word that means “transmitted, bestowed....wielded” but the most awesome translation is “thrust in”.

The Lord is telling us that Jesus is the Father's thrusting blow to the enemy. He still is. When we wield Him and do as He says Jesus is thrust into a situation.

This can be quite an intervention.

**“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” (John 5:24)**

The Apostle Paul speaks of being transferred from being “in Adam” to being “in Christ”.

**“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:22 NASB)**

When Jesus uses this term in John 5:24: “but has passed from death into life” the word “passed” literally means to “have changed places”. We were lifted from death and implanted into life. He changed places with us.

**“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” (John 5:25)**

The term: “the hour is coming, and now is” refers to time as God sees it. An hour is coming (for us) but for Him it “now is.” It’s always now to Him.

The word “hear” means to “give audience” to what is being sounded. There’s lots of sound out there. When we focus on it, listen and do something about it we have “heard” it in the way meant by that word in verse 25.

This primarily refers to the act and process of salvation but I think it also has to do with whenever the Lord speaks and moves to accomplish anything. In each case it has to do, in a way, with bringing His life into a world saturated with death with a focus on the flesh. Therefore, if someone has a flesh based and/or flesh powered plan....program....system and God addresses that thing, it’s a matter of Him stating His intention which He has purposed to bring life to that thing. If those in authority over it choose to allow His life in there it will have “zoe” life and if not...it will just yield death.

**“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice” (John 5:26-28)**

Jesus is saying that not even physical death will impede this.

**“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:28-29)**

There are two resurrections mentioned here. All the dead will be brought before him. Some will be resurrected from physical death. Those dead outside of Christ will be brought alive to receive the execution of the spiritual death sentence. Those dead in Christ will be brought alive to receive the execution of spiritual innocence: eternity in heaven.

**“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”  
(1 Corinthians 11:1 NASB)**

When Paul spoke these words he was teaching a style of living by which a person could follow a person he could see and hear to learn how to literally imitate Jesus.

The way the body of Christ largely teaches this now, in which the Holy Spirit is relegated to a relatively passive role, this means we are only to read the first four books of the New Testament and a few places thereafter, get a feel for the sorts of things Jesus might do and then make ourselves do those. (The key words here are “make ourselves.”) Many of us in the church have been taught that to “imitate Christ” is basically to try to do an impersonation of Jesus.

However, I am told that the idea of “imitating” here is the Greek word that means to mimic. It means to follow someone AS they do something, not a memory of them doing things or stories of them doing things. Rather, it has to do with a here and now moving WITH the person as that person does things. In Ephesians 5 Paul kicks it up a notch by removing the middle man.

**“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children...”  
(Ephesians 5:1 NASB)**

Here we are encouraged to become followers who directly imitate God. The idea here, I am told, is that of putting your hand on an artist's hand....following his



movements...until your hand and arm has muscle memory of how that painter paints. This has to do with true LIVE imitation. The reason this is important to us at this time is that Jesus Himself tells us in the current text that this is how He accomplished what He did when He spent His short 33 years on the earth in a human body.

**“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”  
(John 5:19)**

**“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30)**

As He went about doing all the things we have read over and over He did them in real time as a human by literally imitating His Father. When the Father did something Jesus did it. When the Father said something He heard it and did it. There is so much liberty in this for us because He was the forerunner. This was so we could learn how to live the very same way.

**“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30)**

From the time we first say “I can do it myself!” we are in a learning process the theme of which is: “no you can’t, but I through you, can!” - God being the teacher. Jesus, Spirit-filled and led from before His conception, knew this truth: “I can of Myself do nothing.”

We must learn this if the power of Christ will ever flow through us consistently and readily.

**“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”  
(2 Corinthians 12:9 NASB)**

The first part of John 5:30 is this lesson: **“I can of Myself do nothing.”**

**“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30)**

Then He shares **how** He does what He does: “As I hear, I judge.” It literally means “as I actively listen and hear, I am able to distinguish, determine and decide about things.” This is such an active, vital and alive manner of living! He takes His guidance from the Father and then He can say, “I trust the conclusions I come to” and “My judgment is righteous.” The Greek word translated as “righteous” means “equitable, holy, innocent”; in other words, he is innocent of impure motives. Why?

**“because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”**

He is going past any earthly motive He **might** have for doing what He is doing, seeking something better: the will (desire, pleasure, inclination, choice) of the Father. He is modeling a style of living to people who He knows will be stuck in a world in which the power of sin will still be active. He does this so that later when the Holy Spirit tells us, through Paul, to “imitate God” we will be able to do so despite being stuck in a world in which the power of sin will still be active.

Jesus knew people would doubt His motives. Is that not what the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders were doing? Is that not what happens to us when we try to seek and obey and carry out God's will? Many of us get sidetracked by the people who doubt our motives. Jesus understood that He was not to be concerned with the accusations of others. He just operated in such a way that His motives would be pure.

Let's be imitators of Christ.

**“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30)**

He would have us operate in such a way and this will optimize the chance that our motives will be pure.

Jesus makes a point in the next verse that I believe reveals the weakness of people who watch other people.

**“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.” (John 5:31)**

If a person says, “I'm really in charge” the saying of it makes one doubt his authority. If a person says, “I'm trustworthy” just saying that makes another person doubt his integrity. If one really is in authority that person never needs to

state it. All authority comes from God if you are a parent, just be that. If you are a boss, just be that. Allow God's authority to flow through you. Trust Him. Trust His design.

What happened in Jesus' case is that the Father sent another to testify of Jesus. In other words, the Father himself testified of Jesus....through someone else.

**“There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.”  
(John 5:32-34)**

One reason that we can trust Jesus' motives is that He has nothing to gain. God needs nothing from man. Jesus basically said, “I really don't need a thumbs up from John the Baptizer..... Why? Because He was doing and saying what He said (imitating the Father) for the benefit of others...for...us.

We can operate in freedom from self doubt, freedom from the disapproval or even lack of overt approval from others simply by seeking to learn the will of the Father for ourselves and doing it to the best of our abilities. We will know we are on the right track when we don't own the task or the target of the task. This is called walking in surrender and living for the benefit of others.

The hard part of that is learning to hear the Father's voice. If we learn to more and more consistently walk in the Spirit we will heed our own self less and less and will walk in surrender more and more consistently, automatically....almost instinctively.

The big hurdle I have seen and experienced is wondering: “Am I really hearing God? Am I really seeing Him?” I think a lot of people struggle with this. This is one huge reason we are called to be a body, linked with others. If we isolate and hold ourselves apart, who will we imitate as they imitate Christ? We won't be able to learn from other members of the body of Christ that are a little father along in their ability to hear Him and see Him, to discern His will, surrender to His will, and obey it and carry out His deeds.

These people are there for a reason. I believe they are graced, not only to personally do but also to be “imitatable” and to imitate someone else as that person follows the here and now movements of the Father through Christ as they allow Him to have His way with them. The Father has answered the big question, “how can I do this?” by providing a body and implanting us in that body upon salvation.

**“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13 NASB)**

Our enemy is always vigilant to do as much harm in us as possible. He tempts us to pull away from the very mechanism that the Father has provided to give us confidence and freedom. He doesn't want us to honor God moment by moment in this most holy form of worship.

**“Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.” (John 5:34)**

Jesus had a desire that someone else would benefit from His efforts, life, blood, etc. He wants us to be restored into His image and likeness. That can be our desire. It's part of our inheritance.

Referring to John, Jesus continues:

**“He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” (John 5:35)**

The Greek word translated as “burning” literally means he was “set afire”. He wasn't merely burning; he was a fire intentionally set. The word “shining” means that he illuminated; “lamp” means that he was a “portable light carrier.”

Pray with me; if this reflects your desire, pray it aloud wherever you are:

“Oh Father! Make me a light carrier that goes wherever YOU want me to go. Illuminate through me. SET ME AFIRE! Intentionally set me afire. Turn me loose to go where You aim me to show what You want me to show. In Jesus we pray this. Amen.”

What will that light reveal? Whatever the Father wants seen and sometimes that's not comfortable. Sometimes we will see and reveal things no one wants to consider. We will do this simply by being who we are in Christ and some people will love us for it and most will hate us for it and many will flee the light.

If they do they do it because they want to. It is their will and not the Father's will. Jesus knew and we must know as well that all we can do is be who we are. We have no power over others to obedience.



**“He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” (John 5:35)**

The term “for a time” saddens me but the truth is if a person’s focus is on a person and not on the God that person reflects and ministers those to whom he ministers will only rejoice (jump for joy) for a time. You can tell if a person follows a person or Jesus through a person by how fast their enthusiasm wanes. Jesus never fails. Jesus never goes away. Jesus never has a bad day.

**“He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish; the very works that I do; bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” (John 5:35-36)**

Jesus depended upon the Father's power resting on the things He imitated in the Father's movements to bear witness of who He was and so should we.

**“But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish; the very works that I do; bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” (John 5:36)**

Jesus virtually says, “The things I ACTIVELY do they testify to ME.” To this day that stands because Jesus is still at work. The things Jesus still actively does function to tell people who He is. The trend in the church to minimize that has hurt the body of Christ and people outside the body of Christ; it functionally limits our knowing Who He still is.

We must trust Him and not trust in visible results. We aren't successful in ministering Jesus because people respond. Our success is not because people like what we do. We are successful because we believe the Lord told me what to do and say and how to do and say it and then we do that to the best of our ability. In essence, we let Him minister through us. This was and is the ministry technique of Jesus.

**“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.” (John 5:37-38)**

You know what is REALLY cool about this verse? REALLY, REALLY COOL? It does not apply to us because we DO have His word abiding in us. Why? Because we DO believe Him!

Jesus told the Pharisees that God “isn’t free to roam at will in your lives (dwell) because you do not believe Me (Jesus)” and remember the theme of this book:

**“but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”  
(John 20:31)**

The Greek word translated as “believing” really means “be living”, actively drawing on Him to live through us.

**“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.” (John 5:37-38)**

Jesus is leading up to something here. The scriptures were there to point to Him but the way the leaders were **using** the scriptures blocked their ability to recognize Him. Isn’t that paradoxical? There is a lesson in this for us: satan loves using something God has established for a purpose to impede that specific purpose. We need to be aware of that; we must be wiser than serpents.

Jesus speaks of the ability to hear the Father’s voice. I believe that all Christians have heard His voice; we just didn’t know it was Him talking. I believe we can know His voice. We just have to become more adept at hearing and listening and heeding.

I wonder how curious this was to hear the first time. Christians are more apt to think about something from God “abiding in us” than they were. The Word didn’t abide or stay in them; it kind of went through them. They memorized the Scriptures but it didn’t wander at will through them. It stayed where they assigned it: in the box.

The word “abiding” is an active word. It means to be inside but not consigned to a part of a person (the way many of us treat Jesus). In many of the homes I visit in while on my out of state trips I pretty much have access to the whole house. I am free to dwell in that house. I have a key. I have free access to the whole place. The Pharisees didn’t do that with God or the Word. They had Him locked down in places they were comfortable with Him being.

He is really saying that the Word does not actively dwell in them because they are not living Jesus, living IN Jesus and Jesus through them.

The next verse was directed at the Pharisees and Jewish leaders but applies to much of the body of Christ today.

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” (John 5:39)**

Jesus said, “The Scriptures testify of Me” and when He said that He was speaking of the Old Testament. Why are the Scriptures there? They are there “to testify of Him. They are there to aim us to Jesus, to teach us Who He is, to help us know Him so we WILL entrust ourselves to Him and live....really live...for Him and BECAUSE of Him. That is the purpose of the Word: to reveal Jesus but the writings are not supposed to be a source of life.

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” (John 5:39-40)**

The Scriptures are to be a sign post directing people to life which is ONLY found in Jesus. A version of the Bible cannot give us life. A certain congregation or denomination (subset of the whole body of Christ) cannot give us life. The body of Christ cannot give us life. Being right cannot give us life. Doing things cannot give us life. Appearing right cannot give us life.

**“But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”  
(John 5:40)**

Only Jesus can give us life. We must be willing to come to Jesus so that we may have life. The Greek word translated here as “come” means to “go to, be with, accompany.” We must be willing to accompany Jesus, to walk with Him, imitating Him in a here and now way and then we will experience real life and real freedom. Any way we try to live on our own and not with Him really equates with not accompanying Him and **that’s** when we feel lifeless and hopeless and empty.

Personal ministry opportunities come whenever people refuse or don't know to go to Jesus for LIFE. When we turn instead to something or someone else for life we get tired. This happens a lot. We often expect a group of mere people or a system or an organization or a pile of rules to provide life and people cannot do that; nothing earthly can. Only God can provide life (zoe).

Too often congregations really believe they can provide life if the music is just right and the show is just right and the programs are just right and the building is just right. In the growing part of the body of Christ that rejects institutional “church-ianity” there is a tendency to do the same thing. The thought is that if we DON'T have buildings, programs, etc. people will have life.

Whatever the format, and in some formats this is almost impossible, the only valid goal is to point people to Jesus where they will find **real** life and will tap it IF they depend on Him and Him alone. The deal is that this seems to happen better in ones and twos and other small groups because in those settings people tend to more easily be able to admit they don't readily trust Jesus. Then we can do “personal ministry”.

This is a rich passage of Scripture. May the Father bury it deep within our hearts and may He water it and may it grow and bloom and yield heavy in us.

I believe dishonoring Jesus by not trusting Him for life still happens a lot now.

**“I do not receive honor from men.” (John 5:41)**

Jesus isn't saying that He is upset because men don't honor Him. He's saying that people do not honor Him. The Greek word translated as “honor” here is really “glory.”

Jesus does not depend upon men to get honor. His glory flows from heaven's throne and always will. When we glorify Him what is really happening is that God's glory flows through us and to Jesus. The key concept here is that God supplies EVERYTHING we need.

**“But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.”  
(John 5:42)**

Imagine you thought you were really spiritually advanced and then Jesus told you that. How appropriately deflating would that be?

**“I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if  
another comes in his own name, him you will receive.” (John 5:43)**

That term “in My Father's name” is interesting. It is an authoritative term. Jesus came representing the Father. All godly authority is granted, not seized, and this was His way of saying, “the Father is here **THROUGH ME.**” If we are authorized by someone to represent that person that person's influence is present through us. This is what Jesus was communicating.



So, the Father came through Jesus and they did not receive Jesus. The word “receive” is the Greek word “lambano.” It means to violently seize something, absorb it and make it yours.” They did not absorb what Jesus had to offer therefore they did not receive the Father. Jesus contrasts this with people who come representing themselves, an earthly thing, and that person they **WILL** receive.

Isn't it interesting how we crave something that the world will not offer and when it comes we miss it, preferring instead something from the earth? If that earthly thing was all that hot it would satisfy us in the first place!

Jesus tells this to people in A.D. 30-33 but it applies to us as well. Why do we often not want to believe? It's because we trust the earthly. This is a side effect to the Fall of man: rejecting life from God (in Adam) we come into this world with our eyes fixed on people, things, the earth. Even after we are saved we still tend to trust what we can see and not this invisible God. One of the biggest parts of the sanctification process is to learn to lose our trust of the earthly and replace that with a trust in the heavenly.

I find that even in the body of Christ people are often encouraged to place their trust in the earthly. I value the gathering of Christians in the name of Jesus, yet I see something of this danger in how we often present the assembling of ourselves together. If a person has a problem, what is the first thing Christian people ask?

They ask, “Are you going to church?” Why do we ask that? Often it is because we trust an activity or a building or a group of people to keep us spiritually stable. Now, I understand that when we gather in Jesus' name, showing up at a meeting or a building will satisfy some of what we are commanded to do. We will bear one another's burdens, correct, encourage and weep when others weep.

But in the hustle and bustle of the Sunday performance that is not practiced as a rule. All too often the messiness of real pain and real need gets in the way of the program in our Christian meetings. At one church I attended for a while I once actually encouraged people to leave and take care of someone who had fled in tears and the “pastor” rebuked me for that. It was disruptive to what **he** had planned for that hour and a half.

His belief was that had the person just sat there for that 90 minutes she would have somehow been comforted and healed by some sort of spiritual osmosis, I suppose. My point for bringing this up is that it shows how much we trust the mechanism of the earthly meeting, building, group or whatever. The sobering reality is that believing that just being there will help people is, really, magic.

Having said all that, I believe that even in institutional church settings, with liberty people can have encounters with Jesus. I've experienced this many times. So, when I attend one regularly or visit one I am always prepared and also encourage others to listen to the Spirit. I also encourage them to, decently and in order, feel free to walk away from the "order of worship" if one of His sheep needs you and if He directs you to do so.

I encourage this whenever I minister in smaller groups too. Life comes from Jesus, not from my outline on how the meeting is supposed to go.

**"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." (John 5:43)**

The bottom line: we need to be aware that we will have a tendency to trust the earthly because we are more familiar with it. These people rejected the Father through Jesus because they preferred an earthly person who was more familiar to them. Jesus says that this tendency actually prevents us from believing in the Father

**"How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?" (John 5:44)**

I think we have all been a part of some Christian group that had no spiritual life whatsoever but spent time congratulating one another on how they "did it just right." When we did this we were receiving honor from one another.

As people listened to Jesus say this they grew angry with Jesus because He was telling it like it is but Jesus says something curious next.

**"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you; Moses, in whom you trust." (John 5:45)**

Jesus is so perfectly slick! He says, "There is an earthly guy, Moses. You do trust him and he thinks you stink!" Well, perhaps Jesus wouldn't put it *exactly* like that but that was the gist of what He did say.

**"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me." (John 5:46)**

Where did Moses write about Jesus?

**“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” (Genesis 3:15 NASB)**

**“And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.” (Numbers 21:9 NASB)**

**“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth..” (Numbers 24:17 NASB)**

**“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him..’” (Deuteronomy 18:15-18 NASB)**

All those were prophecies uttered by Moses who they did trust in word but did not trust in deed because they really didn't believe what he said. This was evident from their behavior.

**“But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:47)**

Imagine the stunned silence. They did it their way and we do it too at times. It is good to resolve not to trust ourselves to be all-knowing. I told someone recently that I am at a point in my life where I don't trust my instincts and I thought he would slide off the sofa. He was stunned because he lives by his instincts and it's costing him dearly.

I am mindful that I will instinctively turn to the earthly when the chips are down except in those situations where I have been transformed which I hope to be a gradual but steady process. My hope is that over time, walking with the Lord He will transform and renew my mind to such a degree that I will find myself with more and more pervasive instincts that draw from the throne of God and not from my own flesh, other people, earthly systems, etc.

Some people will not understand and will, at times, mislabel our motives as it comes to pass gradually through walking with the Lord. This happened with our mentor Jesus and it will happen with us. All we can do is what He did: tell people where our heart is and hope they will see for themselves and try it.

I would like to close this chapter with one of my favorite passages:

**“If (since) then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory..” (Colossians 3:1-4 NASB)**

Based on something that happened (the old you died in Christ) we are to live as if it did. Based on something else that happened (you rose with Him) we are to live as if it did. Sometimes the Gospel isn't really all that complicated.

**Father God, thank You for this time to study Your Word. We thank You that You are concerned with the lives, wants, desires of Your people and want to hear our petitions. Thank You that we don't have to scuttle to you like fearful subjects. Rather, You have given us the right to approach Your throne boldly, so we do. We lift ourselves to You. Reveal to us anything in us that keeps us from being all You want us to be and when we release it to You whisk it away quickly. Fill us. Thank You for giving us Jesus as someone to imitate and then others in the body of Christ to imitate as they imitate Him imitating You. You truly do satisfy all our needs in Christ Jesus. We thank You that YOU are our authority, and by Your Word we can be healed. We ask that You would increase our faith. We ask that You would heal our unbelief. We pray that You would cause us to see You really do always and forever have our best interest at heart. Show each of us Father, what it is in our lives that causes us to lack trust and fix that. We ask that You bring us to a place of wanting You more than anything else that grabs our focus. Give us a holy desire and longing for things of YOU. Father, we thank You for loving us. We lift this prayer to You Father. May it be a sweet savor to You. We thank You for all these things in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.**



## CHAPTER SIX

Gracious Father we honestly thank You for Your ever watching guidance and Your gentle spiritual leadership in our lives. We also thank You for the wonderful ability to come together in the name of Your precious Son - that we have the freedom to study, worship and fellowship together even if we are not physically present. We humbly ask your divine guidance on us all, and lead us in Your revelation at this time. Heavenly Father we ask You this night to draw near unto us as we draw near to You. We ask this before we open Your scriptures to see what you have in mind for us. Father, I ask that you be our focus. Open our ears, our eyes, and our hearts Father. Heavenly Father we ask this in the name of the One Who first loved us, the One from whom all blessing flow, the One who died in our Place. In Jesus' name. Amen

Jesus said some passionate and hard things to say in what we know as Chapter 5 and then He moved on. He trusted the Father to accomplish whatever He willed with what was said.

**“After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.” (John 6:1)**

This lake was renamed in honor of a Roman emperor. Tiberius was the capital of the province of Galilee and was named after the Roman Emperor Tiberius.

**“Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.” (John 6:2)**

The Greek word for “signs” is “semion”. It literally means “an indication.” A great crowd of people followed after Him, not necessarily because they believed on Him as the Son of God but because they saw his miracles. Again we see man’s focus on an earthly thing.

I spend a lot of time praying and meditating on what God would have me know about ministry and it occurs to me that God takes into account our tendency to be earth bound. He knew that preaching the deep things of the Kingdom would often go right over people’s heads. Why is this? Their eyes were fixed on the earth - as ours tend to be even after we are saved.

Paul tells us this:

**“If (since) then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”  
(Colossians 3:1-3 NASB)**

He says this because he knows that, even after being saved, we have a tendency to focus on the earthly. What am I talking about when I say “earthly things”? I refer to people, circumstances, things and other earthly limitations that captivate our focus. Knowing that this was the case, Father chose to instruct Jesus to use these signs.

**“Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.” (John 6:2-3)**

The sea of Galilee was surrounded by hills. Jesus goes up on one of these to be with His disciples.

**“Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.” (John 6:4)**

Many people were gathering for that feast. Where did Jesus go? He went where the people were. This is why I believe we are to mingle with people in traditional churches: they are us. God has called His body to assemble in geographical places for His purposes. People have chosen to shatter His body into multiple subgroups that usually do not cooperate.

If my human body functioned like that it wouldn't be able to accomplish anything. This explains why the body of Christ isn't accomplishing much in the world. It's hobbled. Some of us choose to see ourselves as members of the whole body of Christ and not as holding allegiance to a piece of it. We see the people in those man made institutions as parts of the whole body as well. When it gathers - we belong with it.

Jesus would go places where He knew the people would be clustered. Sometimes He withdrew to be alone or He would be with smaller groups but always, best I can tell, to regroup, rest and be refreshed. This prepared Him to go back to Father's favorite thing: the people.

The Word says we are to imitate Christ and to not forsake the assembling of ourselves. This, I believe is why it says that. God wants His body to function as a true body and not as a loosely assembled collection of pieces parts that won't even talk to one another. He desires fellowship among us....koinonia....and not division in His body.

**“Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’” (John 6:5)**

Jesus was not stymied by this problem. First, He was looking down - most likely in prayer listening to Father. Then He lifted His eyes and saw the people. Next we see His inclination: to take care of the earthly needs of the multitude. These are **all** lost people; the earthly is all they really think about. The same is true of the lost to this day.

Then Jesus set out to meet the earthly needs with a heavenly purpose a sign to point to the heavenlies. He has more to accomplish here than just feeding people. He has a lesson for Phillip and for us.

As I grow in ministry I am seeing that there are three main stages to ministering to someone:

- 1) We, as the ones doing the ministry, see a need and that God has an answer
- 2) We lead the person God has put on our hearts to the recognition of the need; that's the part that hurts for the person - admitting the need, admitting that we lack
- 3) When the person is ready to receive the answer God releases us to present the answer and so we do

The frustrations always seem to be related to several aspects of this. One is that we see a need and WE have an answer but it might not be God's answer. Another is that we don't typically listen to Father; we just go at a pace that seems right to us. Still another is that when we do that the person is almost never ready to receive and we present it before he is ready to receive.

What happens to manna that isn't used in its time? It spoils and is wasted. It is crucial that we hear the Lord. This is why satan seems to spend so much time convincing us that its impossible, that God doesn't speak today...that we can't hear as individuals.

It is a false belief that we can't hear God in this day. We can! We will! What is the number one thing that God seems to use to get a person to the point of receptiveness to His best for them? I'll give you a hint: we hate it.

**“Stripes that wound scour away evil, And strokes reach the innermost parts.” (Proverbs 20:30 NASB)**

I think the answer is “pain.” Think about it: we were born into automatic obedience to the enemy.

**“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience...” (Ephesians 2:1-2 NASB)**

We were born into a situation where we walked “according to the prince of the power of the air”, in obedience to him. The theme of most personal prayer requests seems to be “take my pain, discomfort, uneasiness away”. I don't think that is a wrong thing to pray; at the same time I believe that some pain has a Godly purpose. Often it's to help us learn to receive from Him instead of some earthly system, people and circumstances.

**“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, And saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18 NASB)**

**“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” (Psalm 51:17 NASB)**

When I am broken and no longer trust myself or others or earthly things to save me, this is when my salvation is realized by the Lord and He is patient to wait.

**“Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’” (John 6:5)**

You know, Jesus never has to ask any questions. He knows everything. Whenever He asks a question it's so that some human will wonder what He knows already. Jesus is up to something here. He already had a plan.

**“But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.” (John 6:6)**



He always does. He is the Provider. The word “test” is highly misunderstood in the body of Christ. We hear it and we think, “pass or fail.” I hear it all the time, “God tested me. I failed.” The truth is that this is a term often used in metallurgy in which stress is applied to something to purify it. Phillip had some wrong beliefs in his head so Jesus applied stress. Can you imagine being with 11 of your peers and Jesus asks **you** a question like this?

Jesus saw something in Phillip that was an impediment to his obedience and asked the question to give Phillip a chance to see it and decide if he wanted to get rid of it. Some would say that what Phillip does next amounts to failing the test. I believe he simply reveals what is in himself that Jesus wants him to abandon.

**“Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.’”  
(John 6:7)**

Phillip answers a question that Jesus did not ask. His is the answer to the question: “do we have enough money to buy the bread we need?” Jesus asked this question, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” to focus Phillip and the others on what He was about to do.

How often do we do what Phillip tried here: to try to answer a question that wasn’t asked? My experience is that we do that a lot and I think we do that because we want to have an answer. The problem is it’s the answer to the wrong question! Sometimes we get the point, but don’t want to answer **that** question and Jesus knows this. So He asks us a question to which we don’t have the answer - because He does.

My plea is this: if God asks something let’s take time to pray and see if He just might see something in us that we cannot see. He just might use someone we have trouble trusting to ask it. This is heavenly thinking - colliding with earthly logic. We are to be wise as serpents but not so “wise” that we miss God.

This is what the Pharisees did. They missed God....because they were so smart.

**“One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’” (John 6:8-9)**

Andrew addresses Jesus’ question but cannot see how it can help. One cool fact here is that barley loaves was the food of the poor. A little guy, a nobody and not just a nobody but a poor nobody offers what little he has and many will benefit. You know, many of us often think, “What do I have to offer, really?” As we see

the need, especially with the mind of Christ, it seems so HUGE and we are so few. “What do I have to offer, really?”

Our hope and certainty is that Jesus specializes in taking little and doing big things with it and through it. The selflessness of this kid is touching. It doesn't seem to matter to him that what he has can't really touch the needs of the multitudes. He just wants to give it.

People will donate \$5 to our ministry and try to apologize that it's not more. I didn't even ask for the \$5. The smallness of it isn't the point. What matters is that they needed it for themselves yet were willing to serve God with it. That matters!

I personally don't think that any of us is small or insignificant. If we think we are, God works with that. He still moves stones. He STILL multiplies loaves and fishes. It is His nature to make something out of nothing or seeming nothingness.

He never changes.

**“One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’” (John 6:8-9)**

Jesus is not stunned to discover this.

**“Then Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.” (John 6:10)**

In Jewish custom only grown men were counted. Therefore, it's not outrageous to think that more like 10,000 were served that day counting women and children.

**“And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.” (John 6:11)**

Let's see the pattern here. Jesus takes the few loaves and the fish, gives thanks then He gives them to someone else and they pass it out. There is plenty to go around. This is the pattern of the body of Christ: God taking little...ministering it abundantly to people through other people. How much did they get? They get “as much as they wanted.”

This is a key phrase. How much Jesus will we get? The same: “as much as we want.” How much healing will we get? Again: “as much as we want”. How much wisdom will we get? How much revelation? How much joy? Peace? Love?

We will “as much as we want.” I believe that people receive what they want. The need is almost daunting but the supply is limitless.

**“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19 NASB)**

All my need...all your need...what quenches the supply....is the human will...resisting the supply from God.

**“So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’” (John 6:12)**

This word “filled” is the Greek word “empiplemi”; it means to be “satisfied”.

Jesus understood people. He knows how wasteful we are in the flesh. What was left behind would be lost, wasted, and destroyed. Jesus said, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” I wonder if there is a here and now application to that.

Sometimes I will be ministering to someone and I can almost see crumbs from the bread I am breaking falling to their feet. These are the things God has for them that they won’t receive. I have done that myself: wasted some of the completeness Jesus wanted for me. It felt like crumbs to my feet.

Jesus says, “Go gather those so they won’t be wasted.” As I minister, I note what was not being received and take my little invisible grace basket and pick up the pieces to be presented again later. Someone asked me recently if I ever got tired of telling him the same thing over and over. I really don’t. We exist when we minister to serve the Father for the benefit of those to whom He sends us. We exist for Him to minister through us.

Jesus says, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” The Greek word translated here as “remain” is related to the word that means “superabundant.” The fact is that even when we sense that God is completely failing, He ALWAYS gives more than we can ever use.

We are often concerned that something will be wasted when things happen to us. Indeed, sometimes it seems that what we have lost is wasted but really, from God’s perspective (reality), it never is wasted. In His economy there is no waste.

**“Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.” (John 6:13)**

We should take note that there are no fragments of fish left; there is just bread leftover. Jesus is the Bread of Life. There is always plenty of Jesus to go around.

When it was all done that day Jesus hadn't really taught. The people came there to be taught and maybe to be healed. What they got, instead, was what the Father always and forever intended them to get that day. There is a kind of holy tension involved in most of our encounters with Jesus if we live the life. We expect Jesus to do something, sometimes something specific and He does do something but it often isn't what we expected. This causes us anxiety or frustration.

We **must** learn to trust Him. He IS God. What He does is really best!

So, He hadn't taught. There was no healing, no raising from the dead; what **did** He do? He fed them. Later He will say, “I am the Bread of Life.” Here, as He did when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, He fed them. He is the Provider. He provided and people took notice. We've all experienced that something will happen and we know *something* happened, but we can't quite identify it. When that occurs we will try to label it. They tried to do that here.

**“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’”  
(John 6:14)**

They thought Elisha had somehow returned. In 2 Kings 4:42-44 Elisha feeds 100 men with 20 loaves of bread. This is a 5:1 ratio. In John 6 Jesus feeds 5000 men (plus women and children) with 5 loaves. This is a 1000:1 ratio not counting the women and children. Jesus knew the political climate there. People were looking for the messiah to become the new king and boot Rome out. Jesus knew this.

They don't properly identify Jesus as God or the Son of God but they do get one thing right: “who is to come into the world.” They know he is from somewhere else. Every encounter with God is an intervention from the heavenlies into a finite now. Each one is an opportunity, orchestrated by God, to get our eyes off our bondage to the earthly and to fix our eyes on Jesus Who is not limited by earthly laws.



**“Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.” (John 6:15)**

Jesus knew that they wanted to make Him an earthly king. This is a real demotion for the King of All. He knew it was sure to counteract the work He had done to take their eyes off the earthly, so he went away.

This is a curious phrase: “Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king.” They intended to **MAKE** Him be in charge. Doesn’t that sound weird? What kind of subjects force a person to be their God? If they were to be successful would they really subject to that king? Or doesn’t that make them the king?

If you *make* someone be king **you** are really in charge.

How often have we witnessed someone trying to **force** someone into a power position over them? They are always frustrated because it fails. This is a core truth of the flesh: something we made to be king can never really rule effectively over us. However, if we recognize that Jesus is King we are merely placing ourselves under His rule. We are recognizing what is already in place and not making Him be anything; we are simply opening ourselves to being able to benefit from what Father does through Jesus.

**“Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,”  
(John 6:16)**

They apparently knew where Jesus was going next so they set out for that place.

**“got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.” (John 6:17)**

In Matthew 14 we are told that Jesus had told them to meet Him on the other side. These were mostly accomplished fishermen who often went out at night. I am told that even the experts respect those waters to this day. The mountains leading into that inland “sea” funnel the winds and the water is 150 feet deep in places. It can kick up into a frenzy quickly. Everyone there now knows someone who has died like that; it was probably the same then.

**“Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.” (John 6:16-18)**

The word “arose” is a curious one; it literally means to “arouse or wake fully.” This reminds me of what happens with human souls. Everything will look quiet, God will lead us to do something pretty tame then something that was there slumbering, as it were, will awaken and suddenly all heck will break loose.

**“So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.” (John 6:19)**

They had rowed all night and had only gotten that far. They should have been across it by then. Think of the scene. I remember seeing pictures of this as a kid in which there was a little froth on the water and Jesus was walking along. Pretty serene. In reality the waves there get to be 10-15 feet deep. So, as He walked along the boat would go up and Jesus would go down and they wouldn’t see Him. Then the boat would go down and He would go up and they wouldn’t see Him. Then they would both be up and they COULD see Him.

Have you ever been out in a stirred up sea? It’s a scary experience. In the times it happened to me the one thing I knew was that I was at the mercy of the elements. There is hardly anything you can do but hang on, try to point the bow into the waves and bail out the water.

As Jesus approached the boat the disciples were afraid. Many Christians are afraid of Jesus. What they experience is not holy reverence fear. They are AFRAID of Him, of what He will do in their lives and you know what? He IS dangerous.

He came to seek and save the lost but also to destroy the works of satan and I believe that when we move in the flesh we practice some of those works of satan. We, often unwittingly, try to be our own little gods or try to own something we sold to Him – something that He purchased on the cross. When He goes to take what is His or destroy what He came to destroy it frightens people.

All Jesus has to be is Himself and some people will be afraid of Him. These men in that boat had just seen him feed 5000 men and probably as many women and children with the lunch of a poor child. They had seen Him do miraculous things. Jesus was walking on the water. True, it was not something you see every day, but it WAS classic Jesus - doing the miraculous. Their response to Jesus being Jesus is that they were afraid. We’re no different at times. But He provides the antidote to that fear.

**“But He said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’” (John 6:20)**

One version of this scene says they thought He was a ghost which makes sense. All their lives they had never seen a man striding on the water.

I find it interesting that the literal translation of “It is I” is “I AM” and that, in turn, literally sounds more like this when it is translated: “I AM ALWAYS AM’ing.” It reflects that He is actively and totally and never-endingly being.

So when He says, “It is I; do not be afraid” He is literally saying, “God is here.....I AM” and **that’s** why we are not to be afraid: the I AM is here. If God is for us who can be against us?

**“Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.” (John 6:21)**

All encounters, it seems to me, contain these elements:

- 1) We need Him
- 2) He is there
- 3) We get to receive or deny Him
- 4) If we do receive Him we benefit.

From what do we benefit? We benefit from His I Am’ing. All His qualities that apply to the situation (from His perspective, anyway) are put to bear in the situation.

**“Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.” (John 6:21)**

They were about half way across the sea, rowing their hearts out. Jesus gets in the boat and they have arrived...immediately.....instantly. What happened there? They were “translated” there. This is a bible word that means that God takes people from one geographical place to another instantly. When they received Jesus they were immediately where He wanted them to be.

Let’s apply this to the idea of a sudden storm kicking up in the sea we call the human soul. This is never a surprise to the Lord. He knows but we’re caught off guard and along He comes, the Ever-present One. When we receive Him for peace, fear flees. When we receive Him for order, chaos flees.

And when the crisis passes we often find ourselves immediately where He wants us to be. What often happens is that when a soul storm kicks up we instinctively turn to the tools we usually use to handle our lives. There Jesus stands, always the

Gentleman, awaiting an invitation to come in but we are focused on our tools - on our abilities - too focused to see the Answer and call upon His name.

**“I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; and I am saved from my enemies. For the waves of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; the cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.”**  
(2 Samuel 22:4-6 NASB)

**“He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my stay.”**  
(Psalm 18:16-18 NASB)

**“And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”** (Psalm 50:15 NASB)

**“As for me, I shall call upon God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice.”** (Psalm 55:16-17 NASB)

**“In the day of my trouble I shall call upon Thee, for Thou wilt answer me.”** (Psalm 86:7 NASB)

**“And in that day you will say, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted.’”** (Isaiah 12:4 NASB)

**“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for ‘whoever will call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’”**  
(Romans 10:12-13 NASB)

Some things never change.

**“Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.”** (John 6:21)

Think about what the multitudes saw.



**“On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone;” (John 6:22)**

They saw the disciples get into the boat alone without Jesus.

**“however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks;” (John 6:23)**

So they looked around and couldn't find Jesus and then they decided to go where the disciples had gone, figuring that wherever they landed Jesus would be there too.

**“when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.” (John 6:24)**

They were “seeking Jesus”. The Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word translated here as “seek” means “to worship.” Seeking God has a long and fruitful history in the Word.

**“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 4:29 NASB)**

**“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13 NASB)**

Unfortunately, the opposite is true too. If we don't seek, we won't find? In 2 Chronicles 14 Rehoboam does the opposite

**“And he did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 12:14 NASB)**

I was talking to someone once who made a comment about another person. He said something like this: that she wasn't advancing with the Lord but was just kind of standing still, dead in the water and I thought, “I don't believe that.” In the human body what we call health is when the body makes more new cells faster than they die. We are always either advancing or we are falling back.

There is no such thing as standing still spiritual growth-wise. We run across strong words like “seek” and they suggest action! When I was a chaplain at the county jail in Houston I asked the men once what “seeking” was like. Almost every time I did that they just said, “I dunno.” Then I asked them if some policeman had chased them down to arrest them and they would ALL perk up. They knew! **They** had been sought relentlessly!

I said, “Did they give up or do it halfway?” One said, “NO! They sent that . . . blankety-blank dog in after me!” The police were seeking him. The prisoners knew what it felt like and they had seen someone seeking.

We all have done that with something. Many of us relentlessly pursue peace in people, things, circumstances or love or joy or happiness or security or acceptance or value. We chase it down. We never give up. We send in the dogs after it! All the while, God, who IS Love, is there patiently awaiting us. All the while, Jesus, who IS the Prince of Peace, Who Paul says IS our peace, is there patiently awaiting us.

If we’re knocking ourselves out trying to get something from ourselves, people, things, degrees, etc and all we get is more despair, more tired, more hopeless...etc perhaps we’re seeking the wrong thing. Perhaps we need to change course and seek it from the Source: God, through Jesus. When we change that course, THIS is literally repentance.

The people in John 6:24 went somewhere to seek Jesus. They went where they thought He would be even though it made no sense that He would be there because it was a long walk and they hadn’t seen Him get into the boat. They were desperate for it and knew He was the only real supply.

May it be so with us.

**“And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’” (John 6:25)**

This cracks me up because in essence, Jesus has ALWAYS been here. He created the universe and all that is in it. He is ever present. When He was born He was merely being made physically manifest. So, when they ask, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” if He were to respond it would have to be in a way that took into consideration that they were earth bound, often seeing the physical only.

They wanted to know how He got there. Have you noticed that often Jesus doesn’t reply directly to a question asked? Sometimes it’s like He shoulders aside what they are asking to get to the real meat of an issue. Here they ask a question that

comes out of their focus on the physical and He is trying to introduce them to a new way of living. It's a way in which the spiritual is positioned in a person's consciousness where it needs to be: primary.

Sanctification, the work God does in cooperative believers after they are saved, is essentially a matter of learning to approach the world as spiritual beings who live out our physical lives in a physical world. Truly, this is just temporary housing for us.

**“Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.’” (John 6:26)**

The signs were from the throne of heaven. They were spiritual moves in a physical world. He says, “You weren’t attracted to the effects of a spiritual move. You were attracted by having your tummies filled.”

**“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)**

Jesus is cutting to the meat of the issue. The Greek word translated here as “labor” means “toil” but it alludes to an attitude of something close to ministry. People dedicate themselves to making money and getting things and its ok to get things and make money.

**“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)**

One day, though, the mere physical goes away. It dies.

**“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)**

All too often we spend ourselves going after things that do not last; meanwhile, God is extending something to us that will never die. Jesus said that we were to “labor....for the food which endures to everlasting life.” The term “everlasting life” refers to perpetual “zoe” life, the good stuff...a flow of real spiritual life.

**“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)**

What is Jesus telling them here? He is presenting the gospel! What do we have to do to earn everlasting life? We cannot earn it because it is a gift “which the Son of Man will give you”. Why can He do this? It is “because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

The Father set His seal on Him. This seal deal is interesting. It refers to a signet ring imprint. It does a lot. It identifies that thing or person with the sender and is also a matter of security in that whatever is sealed is safely contained. Jesus is saying, “I have a mission. I’m sent by a King. I’m safe to perform it.”

This is important to us personally because, we too, are sealed and this makes sense because we are co-laborers and co-heirs with Jesus.

**“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.” (Romans 8:16-17 NASB)**

We inherit what He has and He had a seal! He had a seal for a purpose. We, too, have a seal.

**“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NASB)**

I believe with all my heart that we have a seal for a purpose and we share that purpose with Jesus. We will not BE Jesus but we are being conformed into His image to do His works. The Word is clear that all believers are ministers of reconciliation.

**“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NASB)**

We are sealed. That means we are secure. It means we are identified with the Father. It means we have a mission. What is that mission? It is to lead people to meat.

**“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)**

We present food that endures to everlasting life. We cannot save people. We cannot personally give them everlasting life but we CAN introduce them to Jesus who **does** save and who does give everlasting life. When the Holy Spirit used that word “seal” there and in 2 Corinthians He knew what He was doing.

**“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14 NASB)**

The Holy Spirit is a pledge of what? He guarantees our inheritance. Too often I have heard it said that all our inheritance amounts to is a place in heaven and really, you know, that would be enough. It is amazing we get that, isn't it? However, since our inheritance in Christ is so much more, settling for that and not entering into the rest of it is such a terrible waste.

In Ephesians 1, Paul prays a wonderful prayer and a big part of it has to do with our inheritance. It is wrapped in language that speaks of the power and privilege we have as Christians, not necessarily to be wealthy in earthly ways, but to be wealthy in spiritual life, spiritual power, spiritual sight, etc.

Listen to his prayer. Hear what Paul wishes for us to experience:

**“For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers...” (Ephesians 1:15-16 NASB)**

What does he pray for us?

**“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,” (Ephesians 1:17 NASB)**

He prays that we may receive wisdom and revelation, spiritual gifts.



**“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,” (Ephesians 1:18 NASB)**

He wants us to experience spiritual sight so that we will know. So we will know what? So that we will know what we HAVE in Christ.

I am a missionary to the area in which I live. My mission is to introduce people to more of what they have in Jesus than they realize. So many of us live limited lives...in bondage to things but we are free in Christ, we just don't know it, therefore we don't live it.

Paul was praying that we would see what we have.

**“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might...” (Ephesians 1:18-19 NASB)**

We have something else: His power aimed toward (and through) us. Jesus goes on:

**“Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’” (John 6:28)**

The people wanted an assignment. They said, “tell us what physical activities we need to do to be able to work wonders.” In the body of Christ people are told, “you HAVE to read your bible or pray or whatever or God won't accept you or use you.”

Here is Jesus response which, really, is harder than a physical assignment:

**“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’” (John 6:29)**

In English, “believe” means to “have mental assent”. In other words, we read that and we think it means that we agree with the fact of Jesus but that isn't what it means. To “believe” in Jesus really means to “fully entrust yourself to” Jesus. Hence, Paul pleads in Romans 8 and Galatians 5 for us to trust our own flesh less and depend more and more fully on the Spirit.

And so, here is the Lord's challenge to all who read this: do we really want to do the works of Jesus? I'm personally tired of the mundane. I'm personally tired of the limited success of manmade programs and systems. The shelf life of these things is horribly short. If this were not so why would we constantly be replacing them with the newest program of the month?

If we really want to do His works what must we do?

**“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’” (John 6:29)**

Let's spend less time doing what everyone else says works, turning to programs, systems and the like and fully entrust ourselves to Jesus afresh moment by moment and then let's see what HE does with us, in spite of us, THROUGH us.

We humans want to make ourselves believe in Him but what did Jesus say? “This is the work of God...” Much of the “discipleship” out there has to do with spiritual groups teaching their people how to try to sanctify themselves. While we cannot be passive in it at all, it is not our job to heal, cleanse, complete, and fulfill ourselves. It is the work of God to do that.

Our work is in presenting ourselves to Him so He will renew our minds. Do we only do this at some event? Do we do this one time or continually? One weakness of how we “do church” today is that we have developed an “event mentality.” We seem to live from meeting to meeting instead of in a constant involvement with God. The best way I know to live this more and more constantly is to learn to walk in dependence upon the Spirit.

We, whether we know it or not, crave to always feel His presence, to always know experientially that He is with us, working through us. We would do well to know that the power we move in is more His and ever less ours.

When we present ourselves to Him like that, in dependency upon Him, we find ourselves “believing” in Him almost effortlessly. We must also remember believing doesn't mean to just agree with a concept in our minds; it literally means to “be living in Him.”

**“Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?’”  
(John 6:30)**

Sometimes we people just don't get it! He just told them that their job was to simply entrust themselves to Jesus and not to anything else. He goes on:

**“Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” (John 6:31)**

I do appreciate that they were interacting with Jesus. They kept pressing at Him. I think it belies a hunger inside them and I always love seeing that in myself and in others.

Have you ever been around someone in the body of Christ and thought, “that one is a real spiritual powerhouse?” These people are like powerful hoses that shoot out spiritual power, wisdom, insight, healing and teaching ability. That’s what we are able to see but the image I am getting is this: on the other end of that hose is a pump that is HUNGRY for input. That person needs to be fed whatever it is they are showing us.

A fire hose works like that because of several reasons:

- 1) There is a supply!
- 2) There is a pump that is hungry for the supply.
- 3) There is someone who is aiming and unleashing the supply.

My point is that when we see power being poured out somewhere in the mix is hunger. These people were talking with Jesus.

**“Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” (John 6:30-31)**

They are hungry and they don’t mind looking foolish. They **want** what He has but they don’t know exactly for what they hungered and that explains all the sin in our lives and in the lives of others. We are starving! We just didn’t know for what. It’s a secret, even to ourselves, that what we hunger for is the Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

**“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.’” (John 6:32)**

Jesus says, “Moses didn’t give you that, directly implying that God did but now MY Father gives you true bread.

**“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (John 6:33)**

From our perspective we can see something that perhaps they could not; we can see that way back that bread that they got in the wilderness was a foreshadowing, a picture of Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem which being interpreted means “house of bread” so Jesus was born in the right place to be our bread of life.

Next Jesus tells them that this is that bread.

**“Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’”  
(John 6:34)**

Can you imagine how Jesus felt to hear this? This is what God always and forever aches to hear from His children. A while back I was ministering to a young man; he wasn’t interested in walking with God which made me sad for him. Recently, though, I heard him say, “I want to be a better man. I want to be a man God would be proud of.” It made my heart leap! I live to hear things like that

When people really want what God has for them they will do whatever it takes to get it. It’s awesome to behold. It can make me cry. Then they begin to blast off and become dangerous to satan’s kingdom.

Jesus had told these people about bread from heaven, that if we consume it, we will never be hungry. I’ve talked about soul hunger and soul thirst and about how when we live in this world expecting someone on the earthly plane, including ourselves, to meet all the needs of our souls, we **will** be hungry and thirsty. Much of the sin we see is borne of people desperately trying to provide for themselves or make someone else do it.

When Jesus spoke of heavenly bread the earthbound people to whom He was speaking said this:

**“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”  
(John 6:35)**

It’s no coincidence that He put it like that. When He said, “I AM” it means “I am always being”. When did He start being the bread of life? He always has been, always is and always will be the bread of life. HE SIMPLY IS.

I believe that just as there is a bread of life there are many other “breads” in this class just as there are many types of bread in a bread store. There is a bread of

death. There is a bread of frustration. There is a bread of depression. There is a bread of rejection and on and on but just one bread of life and I believe we are born hungry and thirsty in our souls. Much of the sin and damage we see, if not all, is related to us going to inferior bread for sustenance.

Try looking for soul hunger and soul thirst and you'll see it in others and when you do you'll see your own. We **must** go to Jesus and when we feel empty and dry it is most likely because we haven't been going to Him. What I have learned about this in the past few years can be summed up in this:

- 1) We can get that life directly from Him**
- 2) We can get it through real fellowship with other people like ourselves: born again people yielded to Jesus**

He is still the supply, directly and through people. This is why we are tempted not to get life from Him. You know, we will never be tempted to do something that is good for us. God draws us to come to Him; He convicts us to do that. Satan, though, tempts us to do things against our design. He tempts us to do things that make us withdraw from God either directly or by withdrawing from "koinonia", the Greek word for fellowship, in which there is an ebb and flow - an impartation of God's life through us.

**"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'" (John 6:35)**

What a wonderful promise! Earlier I asked, "When did Jesus become the bread of life?" and we determined that He always has been the bread of life. This leads to another question: "Why is there so much soul hunger out there if Jesus always and forever has been the bread of life?" It's because people reject Him. He is always there, but many don't want to accept His love and life instead we come to anything but Him.

We haven't "believed in Him; we literally haven't "been living in Him." To "hunger" literally means to "crave." God designed things so that we have a choice and we have to choose to come to Jesus for our life from God but when we entered into the world we didn't know He was an option so we chose from among inferior things.

Jesus had hit a point in His ministry that many of us come to where you know you are called to do something and it will be real and true but it crosses someone else's line. On the other side of that line what we are called to do offends someone else.



We are called to not cause someone else to stumble, but we aren't called to prevent someone else from stumbling. People can fall over on their own.

Sometimes we will find ourselves at a proving point of sorts where we get to see how serious we are about this obedience thing. Will we obey the Lord even at the risk of looking foolish? Will we obey the Lord even at the risk of losing someone else's esteem? Will we obey the Lord even at the risk of losing money, friends and perhaps our lives?

With Jesus there was never any question that He would go where the Father directed Him so He said something that was bound to infuriate some religious wingding:

**"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.'"**  
**(John 6:35-36)**

See what Jesus is doing; he has addressed this as a general thing. "I am bread for everyone....bread so people won't hunger...if people believe they won't thirst." Now he brings it in to the personal level. If He really wasn't the bread of life that would have been a pretty outrageous thing to say - a prideful thing to say. But, He IS the bread of life so He was just speaking the truth.

What He said offended people but not because it was offensive in itself. It offended people because of what resided in the hearts of the Jewish leaders. There is a communication model I use sometimes. Imagine I am talking to my wife Laurie. A diagram of what I have to say looks like this:

**Mike ==> {filter} ==> [mode] ==> {filter} ==> Laurie**

When the message goes from me to her my filter is a coder and her filter is a de-coder. The mode can be talking, written word, drawings, mime, etc. It's just how the message is communicated. If I want my message to get to her clearly, I should do 2 things:

- 1) I should pick a mode that works best for her.**
- 2) I should match my filter to her filter**

I should code it in a way that optimizes the chances that she will decode it with the same code I coded it with. During World War 2 something called the Enigma Code was developed. It was a very sophisticated code used by the military and it

worked because on any given day the encodes were exactly the same as the decodes.

In our lives, we collect info in our filters and most of it is lies, misconceptions and wrong beliefs. We were born into satan's realm and when someone says something and they encode it. It runs through the person's filter which does not clean the message up; rather, it adds error to it and when the message goes through the receiver's filter the same thing happens on the receiver's end.

Jesus IS Truth. When He spoke and when He speaks, His filter is clean but ours is dirty. This is why we must forgive, be restored, be sanctified, be healed and surrender to Him so we will use the mind of Christ.

Jesus spoke to the people and the Jewish leaders heard His pure message through dirty filters.

**“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (John 6:37)**

This is a curious statement. **“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me.”** Here is what I think it means: the Father “gives” people to Jesus. In other words, it means that the Father says, “I will draw men to Me. They are Yours.” Then He touches us and we belong to Jesus and we almost cannot help but come to Him and when we come to Him He accepts us as His own. He folds us in to Him.

**“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” (John 6:38)**

Jesus is modeling a lifestyle here. He isn't in this for His own reason, He is on assignment from the Father. We have free will, but we can at any time freely give up our will to do God's will rather than our own. If we weren't free to not abandon our designs and do His will we wouldn't be truly free to obey.

Many in the body of Christ serve under obligation. They don't serve willingly, but because, in their minds, they **have** to serve. Someone once told me with resignation in his voice, “I'm going to this retreat this weekend.” He was bummed out about it. I said, “Why are you going?” and his reply was, “I **HAVE** to go.” My thought was, “Aren't you free?”

I don't serve because I **HAVE** to; I serve because I can. I don't enjoy fellowship because God tells me to do it; I enjoy it because it is a gift and privilege, because I can! Ain't that grand? We're free in Christ!

**“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:39-40)**

Now **that’s** a promise! What we see here and benefit from whenever we dwell in it is Jesus telling us the truth and it touches ancient hungers and thirsts in us. It truly satisfies or should I say, **HE** truly satisfies. It is to our grief that truth will come to a dry and empty world and that world will reject the only source of satisfaction: Jesus - the Bread and Water of Life.

**“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:39-40)**

Being Jewish leaders, you would think they would be thrilled. The shepherds of Israel were hearing a clue about something we all need: everlasting life, but they saw him as a drunken lunatic that hung out with the “low-life” people.

Several years ago I approached the leaders of a church in the St. Louis area and I shared what I teach in my conference about how we can receive and walk in that everlasting life. The pastors were excited! They wanted that for their sheep and it was exciting to see that.

It was not so with these shepherds in John 6”

**“The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’” (John 6:41)**

You know, when a person has a critical ear they hear what they want to hear and they stop hearing when they hear what they want to hear. These men were stuck in what Jesus said at first.

**“The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (John 6:41-42)**

They were basically checking out His earthly credentials (“His driver’s license says he is from here!”).

**“Jesus therefore answered and said to them, ‘Do not murmur among yourselves.’” (John 6:43)**

This is a rebuke; basically, He said to them, “stop yer grumblin!”

**“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44)**

Jesus shows a bit about the spiritual “mechanics”, if you will, of how a person comes to Him. The Father draws us to Jesus. Since 1 Corinthians 2:13 or so says that the Spirit searches our hearts. When the Spirit discerns that we will be most receptive to Jesus the Father draws us to Him. The Father draws us to Him and we start hungering for Him and then we find Him.

This is why I don't believe in “arm twist evangelism”. If a person is quickened to seek Jesus all you have to do is mention His name and they come. This is simply trusting God in evangelism.

**“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” (John 6:45)**

**“And all your sons will be taught of the LORD; And the well-being of your sons will be great.” (Isaiah 54:13 NASB)**

**“‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’” (Jeremiah 31:31-34 NASB)**

I believe something happens when a Spirit led person teaches: God teaches through that person and you can tell when it happens. People come alive and they remember the teachings. The teachings become part of their lives. Also:

**“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” (John 6:44-45)**

The ones being taught come to Jesus. Their allegiance is not to a congregation or a type of bible or a denomination or some teacher; it is to Jesus.

**“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.” (John 6:46)**

Jesus is giving the Jewish leaders great cause to be upset. The word “seen” doesn’t mean to merely lay eyes on Him; it means “to discern clearly.” Sometimes something happens and a few people look at one another and say, “THAT was God. That is this kind of “seen.”

**“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.” (John 6:47)**

Remember: “believes” means to so “trust Jesus that you literally ‘be living’ in Him”. He becomes the life source for us. THAT is “be living in” and not mere mental assent. It means becoming a part of the body of Christ, ascending into Him and living on Him. He is our source of Life - everlasting...life...deep and wide...never ending...no limits life, ZOE life...straight from the throne to us.

**“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” (John 6:48-49)**

**“I am the bread of life.”** This is one of the many “I am” statements that Jesus made. Manna was bread that was miraculous indeed yet inferior bread. Some of us are stuck on manna that we got early on. That was the bread of life for us but it was never meant to sustain us not forever. It was spiritual baby food. It was meant to get us to a place where we would consciously and consistently draw on Jesus Himself for life. It was manna, temporary bread.

In contrast, Jesus never goes away.



**“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.”  
(John 6:49)**

This is almost an indictment. God provided other bread in the wilderness and they died eventually. That bread came down from heaven. Jesus is contrasting that bread with Himself - a different kind of bread from heaven.

**“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.” (John 6:50)**

We see over and over in the Word comparisons....something versus Jesus. In fact, that is the theme of Hebrews, “Jesus is better”. The Jewish leaders were offering manna: living day to day on temporary bread: the law. Jesus was coming with something better: Himself and grace.

**“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)**

There is a conditional in there: “if”. I have found in my ministry that many Christians are going to heaven but live in such a way that they feel dead. They walk after the flesh instead of after the Spirit. They don’t eat the bread of life. They HAVE it available but choose their own bread...the law...their own ability to cleanse themselves...make themselves righteous, acceptable, loveable, etc.

A local minister once asked me why I am here in this area. I told him I considered myself to be a missionary to this area but not to the unsaved....although I HAVE led some people to Jesus here for salvation. My primary mission field is the parts of the souls of Christians that have not been fully yielded to Jesus. We bring evangelism to the saved and there is much work to be done.

Jesus said His bread was basically that He would die for us. We come to that death for salvation but not for life. The Apostle Paul said he died daily; He received that bread daily: everlasting life. If anyone eats that bread he will live forever.

Jesus died for everyone. He said, “which I shall give for the life of the world”. When all is said and done hardly anyone will respond, but salvation is available to all.

**“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)**

Jesus is living bread...spiritually alive. He is speaking symbolically here, talking about taking something into ourselves and using a metaphor: eating. What happens when we eat? We willfully receive from Him. When we eat we make a decision to eat and receive food into our bodies. The same is true of anything Jesus has to offer. If it is available (and He is) we must make a conscious decision and actively receive if we want to benefit from what He has to give to us.

We're free not to receive, of course, but if we do not we will not receive the benefits of having Him in our lives. As it is with food it is with Jesus.

At times we choose to take in something but it's neither bread nor life! We must be wise. Our enemy satan, through the world, has a lot of other things to offer so Jesus makes this startling comment, that we are to consume His flesh. It really can sound like cannibalism, can't it?

I believe that we were born into a world in which a type of cannibalism was encouraged. I call it "soul cannibalism." Paul spoke of it:

**"But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another." (Galatians 5:15 NASB)**

The Pharisees, for instance, were practicing soul cannibalism every time they made themselves look good at someone else's expense.

In the next verse in Galatians 5 Paul tells us the opposite of soul cannibalism:

**"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16 NASB)**

If we walk in the Spirit which is to take Jesus in and live off that life instead of trying to get life from the earthly plane (which is flesh) we will not consume one another. Why? We won't need to do that anymore. Jesus would be enough...IS enough. This is why Jesus says this startling thing:

**"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John 6:51)**

We just saw that all lost people (and we were all lost) are, by default, living off one another. The Pharisees were too.

**“The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’” (John 6:52)**

The Pharisees either didn’t get that He was using a metaphor or didn’t want to understand. They want to know how He can give pieces of Himself to be eaten by people but really He is talking symbolically about being received and people living off Him in a different way.

**“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.’” (John 6:53)**

He raises the ante! Now He is talking blood too!

**“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:54)**

Many people believe that Jesus is talking about the Lord’s Supper here and He may be. I believe that He is talking about that and other things, which are all intertwined to Him. His flesh is His body and that.....is us: the body of Christ.

The blood of Christ, the Word says, washes away our sins. We can receive that or not. If we are saved we will be clean but sure won’t FEEL clean if we do not receive and dwell on the thought of what happens when we are continually washed clean.

**“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.”  
(John 6:55)**

When we eat the Lord’s Supper it is supposed to remind us of Him not just Him on the earth for 33 or so years or Him as the baby Jesus or Him on the cross or Him in any one way but Him, as He is: always “Aming”. Jesus never changes.

**“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.”  
(Hebrews 13:8 NASB)**

This means that He just IS. When we have communion we often keep Him on the cross or at the resurrection. We cheat ourselves out of some of the effects of the Lord’s Supper when we do that. We are to do it in remembrance of Him - an active remembering. We are to actively think on all of Him and one aspect of Jesus is that He actively lives in each one of us believers, through the Holy Spirit that dwells in each one of us.

When we have the Lord's Supper we do it together and that means we live out a picture of the body of Christ working together. When we enjoy the body of Christ in meetings, meals, fishing, being with one another in the name of Jesus we eat and drink the blood of Jesus.

**“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56)**

That word “abide” is interesting. It means to “to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy; to abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain” and not just sit there. When I go to St. Louis to stay with the family I pastor there I do so for a week or 10 days. When I do I abide there, live there and am active there. I move about the rooms freely.

When we actively draw on Jesus directly and through real abiding fellowship with one another in Christ we abide in Jesus and He abides in us. When we try to live solitary lives or try to survive on our own with or without Jesus we starve ourselves of the only fuel that the new creation that we are is designed to live on: Jesus.

**“As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.” (John 6:57)**

When Jesus described how He lived He often referred back to the fact that it was the Father's life giving Him life that enabled Him to do what He did. In the same way when we allow Him to come into our lives experientially, we live because of the Father's life in us through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes I diagram it somewhat like this:

**Me <=== Holy Spirit <=== Jesus <=== the Father**

**“This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:58)**

So we see that the manna was just a taste of everything Jesus, the bread of life, would be for us. How did they get the manna? God provided it but they had to go out daily and collect it and consume it or it would fall apart. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:31 that he dies daily. The context is a daily dependency upon Jesus, like manna, except that consuming Jesus is much better than manna.

**“These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can understand it?’” (John 6:59-60)**

The Greek word translated as “hard” means “severe, harsh, tough.”

I just love how Jesus just cuts to the bone on the matter.

**“When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, ‘Does this offend you?’” (John 6:61)**

The word “offend” is literally the word from which we get “scandalize.” It literally means to trip someone up, to ensnare them. It’s almost as if He asks them, “Does this saying hang you up?” Jesus often uses this idea to challenge a person, asking if this would cause them to fall into unbelief.

This is a place where Jesus is doing something that most ministers don’t seem to be willing to do. It’s a hard thing but, basically, He is shaking the tree To shake out people who really weren’t believers.

**“What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” (John 6:62)**

He throws down an idea; it’s a nested idea - one inside another. He says, (I paraphrase) “You know I came from heaven so what if you saw me go back up there?” knowing that many of them didn’t really believe He came from heaven.

**“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)**

Jesus has been throwing down the gauntlet all through this passage, underscoring that there is a HUGE difference between heavenly and earthly. He just said, “I came from heaven. If you saw Me go back, how would you see me? Would it be from an earthly standpoint or with a heavenly perspective?”

The flesh, trusting what we can see, profits nothing. He is talking about us in the future consuming Him and manifesting His life. He says (paraphrasing), “These words I physically speak are spirit; they come from a heavenly source. They impart THAT “zoe” life.”

**“‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.” (John 6:64)**



Jesus is shaking the tree, He is drawing a line in the ground. Who will trust in the flesh? Who will trust in the earthly? Who will draw on the Spirit? Imagine how this is for Jesus. He is teaching pure truth. He knows perfectly that most of it is going into the ears of people that will not believe on him.

Mankind has had to rely on our mental abilities to “substitute” for the spiritual guidance we used to have at our creation and our minds don’t want to “loose control” - so we resist the leadership of the Spirit. We don’t understand that we **do** have control and that when we turn it over to the Spirit we still have control. When we do that we are merely exercising it wisely, entrusting ourselves to Someone who is better at life than we are.

I have a little saying: “Whatever God gives us...is to give away.” Sometimes that means that we get material things to share. Sometimes that has to do with the authority we have. We are to give it away but not to some human. We are to surrender it to God (sometimes through humans He selects). Instead, we often give it away to sin, the flesh, perpetrators that we refuse to forgive and so on.

From the beginning Jesus knew who would betray Him and that is interesting to me. This means that when Jesus met a person who “glad-handed” Him He never let that impede His ability to speak into that person’s life. In other words, Jesus was busy being Jesus and even knowing without a doubt that someone standing there would never believe or would even betray Him wouldn’t keep Him from being Jesus.

This is important for us because we are given a chance to be busy being “in Christ”. Just like others have the choice to not receive Jesus or not receive us in Christ we have the choice to not walk in the Spirit or **to** walk in the Spirit while in the face of people who reject us, our Lord or the messages and tasks He gives us. We have a choice.

Jesus chose to be Himself even knowing exactly who would not believe and who would betray Him.

**“‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, ‘Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.’” (John 6:64-65)**

Who does the Father grant to come to Jesus? I believe it is whoever will truly receive Him. Some of those people wanted Jesus. The Father granted that they come to Jesus. Some of those people didn't; they were there for various reasons.

**“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” (John 6:66)**

These were disciples. That word means “learners, pupils.” Jesus shook the tree and a lot of dead wood fell out. The people who really didn't want Him went back. They fell behind. Jesus literally left them where they wanted to be: away from Him. We can choose to not go where He wants to take us. We can refuse to experience all He has for us. We can drop back and cheat ourselves of some cleansing, blessings, equipping, etc.

These disciples went back, fell back from what Jesus had for them but they went further. They “walked with Him no more”. This means that whatever He imparted: grace, mercy, peace, truth they no longer were present to receive it. To “walk with” refers to a habitual lifestyle.

If we were to start hanging back from Jesus we would risk the danger that His way might no longer be the one we habitually walk. When the word “way” is used in the Bible it has to do with a lifestyle. It's similar to “walking”. When we cease to habitually walk with Jesus we cheat ourselves out of the blessings of His way.

**“The steps of a man are established by the LORD; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.” (Psalm 37:23-24 NASB)**

**“Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it. And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday.” (Psalm 37:5-6 NASB)**

**“He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.” (Psalm 25:9-10 NASB)**

This verse in John 6 is sad:

**“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” (John 6:66)**

I hope that as time goes on we will see less and less of that happening.

Can you imagine how Jesus felt when he looked at His core group of disciples and asked them this:

**“Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’”  
(John 6:67)**

The term “go away” in the Greek is a visually rich term; it means to “withdraw; to sink out of sight”. Can’t you think of people you know that have done that? They sort of “disappear” themselves. I hate that but you know why they do that? They do it because they can.

We have the right to do what is bad for us. Hopelessness is almost seductive at times and there are other things that keep us from the Lord’s best for us. There is a more telling definition of “go away”: “to lead oneself under.” When we walk after the flesh, being our own god, we literally lead ourselves into death just as sure as if we were a blind man and simultaneously our own seeing eye dog. We can lead ourselves right into oncoming traffic.

Jesus said, “Do you also want to go away?” “Do you also want to lead yourselves under?” What a powerful question for Him to ask them! They wouldn’t be free to stay if they weren’t equally free to leave and not walk with Him anymore.

**“But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”  
(John 6:68-69)**

How did Peter and the others get to this place spiritually? They hung out with Jesus. They hung out with Jesus **directly** and they hung out with Jesus through the relationship they had with one another. Being with our own kind (others who are in Christ) is so crucial.

Peter is recognizing a powerful spiritual truth. There is only ONE source of life and lasting satisfaction and that would be JESUS! Peter calls Him Lord; it means a lot of things but my favorite is “Owner”.

Peter told Jesus, “You have the words of eternal life.” 1 John 5:20 says that Jesus literally IS eternal life but that wasn’t written yet so Peter couldn’t know it. Therefore, when Peter says that he was doing the best he knew Peter wasn’t able to see Jesus for all He really is. The same is true for all Christians right now. We don’t really know all that Jesus is.

Why did Jesus, knowing He literally **was** eternal life, not correct Peter? It's because Peter was speaking truth as he knew it. In other words, if we are earnest and are trying to walk with Him I believe He takes us where we are. He enjoys what we **do** have right in Him.

**“Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (John 6:69)**

Peter said, “...we have come to believe and know.” This emphasizes that people are all in a process. The disciples have grown; they have come to believe and know something. That's what should happen with us and it is normal.

I often say that if you want to know a person you have to get in a place where you have to rely on him. If you become vulnerable to that person who is failing you, you will come to know him. If we want to know Jesus intimately we **MUST** choose to believe in Him and this means to entrust ourselves to Him. This further means we must make ourselves vulnerable to disappointment and pain and joy and peace and life.

Real life. I don't understand how we can experience it without being open to pain.

**“Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (John 6:69)**

They trusted and knew that Jesus was what they had been awaiting

**“Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”” (John 6:70)**

Can you imagine all the twisting heads on this one? Everyone had to be looking at everyone else to see who the “devil” was. The two most common new testament words to describe Lucifer are “devil” and “Satan”. “devil” means “liar, false accuser”; “satan” means “destroyer”.

Jesus just called one of them a liar and a false accuser.

**“He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” (John 6:71)**

**Father God, thank You for Your Word and for entrusting it to Yourself through yielded regular people. Father, thank You for Your many blessings in our lives. Thank You for everyday miracles. Thank You for Your wisdom,**

Your joy, Your peace, Your “rhema” Word for us. Thank You Lord for this time to open Your Word. Thank You that You built us to be hungry for You and that when we call on You, You are there through Your Son, Jesus. Father, we thank You that You were, You are and You will always be the bread of life, the living water. Father cause those with soul hunger and soul thirst to see their need, to recognize their hunger and thirst, and to turn to You, the ultimate always and forever supply. Father replace whatever bread we are eating on tonight ... depression, rejection, loneliness, fear. Cause us to lie it down Father; cause us to feast on the Bread of Life. Cause us to drink of the Living water so that we may never thirst again. Thank You that You knew we would sometimes be afraid and not wanting us to be controlled by fear or anything else. You Provided. You ARE Jehovah-Jireh, the provider. You really do supply all our need. Remind us of that when we find ourselves desperate and feverishly trying to be our own god - supplying ourselves out of our own lack. Use us, Lord, to draw others in. Cause us to so live for You that others are homesick for You because of our lives. Father, come sup with us. Come fellowship with us. Come sit with us face to face - breath to breath.

Father God thank You for Your Word for leaving a lasting testament to how You are and what You expect, how we are built and designed and function. We thank You for Biblical revelation. Make it be like a seed in our souls that only You can water and grow. Harvest it for Your glory. We ask You to reveal to us personally or through another yielded Christian anything we believe, do, think, or trust that would block You from ruling in our lives. We want You to be our Lord in every way there is. We want to more fully BELIEVE in Jesus. Make it so. We lift ourselves and our lives up to You. Please make Your face to shine upon them. Bring us YOUR peace. In Your mighty and powerful name and in the holy, delightful and lovely name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

Heavenly Father, we come before Your throne in thanksgiving that you have arranged Your perfect timing in our lives to bring us together in fellowship and learning. Reveal what You want us to understand from this chapter as a body and as individuals. We ask that You lead and guide and let us be in Your wisdom to let things be arranged so that a wonderful outpouring of your Spirit would occur with those who most need it. Let us be Your messengers here on the earth to bring Your words of Life to others. We pray that Your ministering spirits, the angels, also attend to this effort of preparation for your blessing we ask on this time of study. Father God, thank You for giving us this medium through which to study Your Word. Teach us so that we might not just know what was intended initially when this passage was written but also how we are to respond to it personally and individually. We know we can trust and rely on You as You have the words of Eternal Life by which we live daily in Jesus name. Amen.

**“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.” (John 7:1)**

Jesus chose where He went carefully. Why? He was going to the cross, so what difference did it make when He would die? Timing is important to Him but not for His sake.

God hovers over all time but people do not. When did Jesus die? He died at the precise perfect moment. This is very important. Sometimes a person walking in the Spirit will refuse to do something and other people won't understand it. In those cases God is choosing the best time for the people involved.

**“Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.” (John 7:2)**

This tells us that the time of year was autumn, the time for the grape harvest.

**“His brothers therefore said to Him, ‘Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.’” (John 7:3)**

Jesus had half brothers and sisters (His Father was Father God and his and their mother was Mary) and they didn't believe in Him as the messiah. They mocked Him.

**“For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.”  
(John 7:4)**

They thought He was just a person who wanted to be important in the eyes of other men. That’s why they said, “no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly.” The term “seeks to be known” literally means “worships being known”. What an insult!

**“For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” (John 7:5)**

This is not uncommon. The people closest to us, when we walk with the Lord, are the ones who most often misjudge our motives and who miss the anointing that is on us at times. I talk about relationship in the body of Christ a lot, stressing the family-ness of the relationships in which we are in Christ. One way satan seeks to meddle with that is to get us to do with one another what Jesus' siblings did with Him. There is an earthly proverb: “familiarity breeds contempt.” We **must** love one another and not bow to that.

I told someone recently that when I try to live Christianity as I know it the ones who have the biggest problem with that are those who know me. They know I am sound and I have been transparent with them for years. Those are the ones who have been most suspicious of me. The unsaved people and the ones with weak walks with the Lord are the ones who can see life in it.

Jesus was raised with these men. Of all people you would think that they would see the power in Him but they don’t.

**“For even His brothers did not believe in Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.’”(John 7:5-6)**

You know, when we don’t ask God His opinion about what to do and how and when to do it, it’s always time to do whatever we want. This is because it doesn’t matter when we do it – it’ll be off God’s timing. So what difference does it make?

Jesus is also saying to them, “You aren’t a threat to satan's kingdom....I AM!” Have you noticed that no one is persecuting Buddhists, new agers, Moslems, Taoists, and on and on. They just go after us. No one ever sues to have a yin-yang symbol removed from anywhere - just the cross. No one sues to stop Halloween, just Christmas and Easter. Why? Jesus is a threat to the world system. No one else is a threat. Jesus is a threat to the world system and Jesus in us is just as much a threat.

**“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.” (John 7:7)**

The Greek word translated as “hate” means “detest”. He tells them, “The world cannot hate you because you’re it!” He says, “The world’s works are evil.” The word translated as “evil” is the Greek word “poneros” - it means “hurtful.” When we take a stand against something that God sees as sin we are accused of being hateful. They see God and the church obstacles to what they want. We are against a world system doctrine that causes so much pain and death and damage in human souls.

**“You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” (John 7:8)**

Jesus sent them on their way. He said He wasn’t going when they went because His “time had not yet fully come.” The term “fully come” is the Greek word “pleroo”; it means “complete and filled to overflowing.” In other words, the Father had not yet accomplished everything He thought necessary to do in people. What He was going to do next would accomplish that.

When we walk with Him we must have patience. We must learn to wait and, typically, we HATE waiting. I would like to share a short word on “waiting”.

**“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” (Isaiah 40:28-31 NASB)**

In this verse, “wait upon” does not mean to sit around hoping God will catch up with us, tapping our feet and thinking, “Come on God. I’m ready to goooooooooo!” The term “wait upon” means to literally “bind ourselves together with Him.” If we do that with God, where He goes - we will go and what He does - we will do.

To bind ourselves to God implies trust....implicit trust and that means that He will take us into places that we sometimes don’t think we are ready to go into and that He will tarry sometimes long after we think He should move. You know what? IT IS HIS RIGHT TO DO SO! He knows best and in our lives...Christian lives, we asked Him to be that for us.

Let's walk with Him in that and then we will mount up on wings like eagles. We will ascend. We will no longer be earth bound because we are also spiritual beings. We can ascend beyond these things in how we live, consider life and move about on the earth.

**“yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” (Isaiah 40:31 NASB)**

The word “weary” means “gasping; exhausted....spent”; “faint” means “tired....from a long haul.” I don't know about you but I'm tired of being exhausted, spent and tired. Let's wait upon the Lord. Let's bind ourselves to Him and go where He goes and do what He does.

**“When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.” (John 7:9)**

What follows is a little surprising because after saying He won't go, Jesus goes. In some Christian circles He might be called a liar. I've seen people do this; if a person is Spirit-led he might announce that he is fully prepared to do something then the Spirit might tell him not to do that but what he said is out there. It's been said. People who do not experience, practice or even believe in a life directed moment by moment by God through His Spirit will accuse that Christian of being deceptive.

There are two main things at work there:

- 1) They may not believe the person has been directed to do other than he had announced he would.
- 2) They really believe that person **has** to inform them that God changed his plans. Some people are really full of themselves. I think it's law in action when people do that to one another.

**“But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.” (John 7:10)**

Jesus went but not because His unbelieving brothers told him to go and that's the key. Jesus didn't take His direction from people. He did as He saw His Father doing.

When Jesus went He did not present Himself there as the Christ. Instead, He went as just one of many people. When I was a child the style of Christendom to which

I belonged basically had Jesus stuck in one of two places: He was either “the baby Jesus” or He was “Jesus on the cross.” The truth is that there are a lot of ways Jesus presents Himself.

One thing I think of a lot and try to wrap my mind around is that as an ever-present being in some way while He was on the earth in a human form for 33 short years He was also seated in the heavenlies. He always has been, always is, always will be forever “am-ing”.

Here we see Jesus as He goes to Jerusalem as a person named Jesus. He observes people celebrating what? They were celebrating Him being their provision in the wilderness and in their history they were in the wilderness. While in the wilderness Jesus was in the midst of them; He was their provision. Additionally, in the very same way they disesteemed that provision with Moses in the wilderness, they disesteemed Him there in Jerusalem in the year 33 or so.

Some things never change.

**“Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, ‘Where is He?’”  
(John 7:11)**

Disesteeming Him wasn’t enough. The Jewish leaders were seeking Him to hurt Him.

**“And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, ‘He is good’; others said, ‘No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.’” (John 7:12)**

Sometimes I wonder what it was like for Jesus: Truth personified being accused of lying. Whenever the Lord releases some teaching or movement in the body of Christ be it a spiritual gift or a prophetic word, etc. someone says that about the person moving in the Spirit. “He or she deceives the people.” People are allergic to an active Jesus.

That word “deceives” means “to seduce a person to roam astray” and now, like then, it’s usually spoken by some Pharisee whose standard is, well, whatever it is they believe. Whatever it is they believe, in other words, is how things should be and anyone who teaches something different **must** be leading others astray, in their way of thinking.

**“However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.”  
(John 7:13)**



No one was bold enough to bluntly say, “Jesus is good!” So sad.

**“Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.” (John 7:14)**

The word “taught” comes from a Greek word that means that He taught interactively. In the church we get this idea that teaching is supposed to be like sermons or a lecture however Jesus talked and listened and taught like that.

**“And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’” (John 7:15)**

How did they know He had never studied? He went to the Temple a bit. I think what they were saying is, “He had never studied **WITH US.**” To people, it’s a big difference.

I live behind a gorgeous little church building made from fieldstones. When the new congregation bought it I went to introduce myself to the people standing outside. I believe we’re all resources gathered by the Lord to wherever we are for the building of His Kingdom. I wanted them to know who I was so I could serve them if need be.

As I approached them the crowds parted to reveal THE PASTOR. He was wearing his uniform: a really expensive suit. I shook his hand and introduced myself and when he learned that I wasn’t HIS kind of Christian I was no longer valid in his eyes. I was dismissed. I wasn’t “with him.”

In John 7:15 the Jewish leaders were basically saying, “We’re it and He never studied with us therefore, He hasn’t studied.”

**“Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” (John 7:16)**

The interesting thing is that they were teaching the Scriptures and *He wrote them!*

**“If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” (John 7:17)**

Jesus is saying something key here: we all can speak and do from our own authority or from God’s and one who knows God’s teachings will know from which authority a person is working.

At one of our home gatherings a man stood up and announced that God told him to give a woman there \$12. When he said that, I **knew** God told him to do it. I just could about smell God's hand on it. She had done some work and at an earlier meeting mentioned that she had never made over \$11/per hour and that Saturday night God exceeded that \$11 for an hour's work. I **knew** it was God at work through that man.

Jesus was teaching some really radical things, things very different from what man had done to twist His scriptures but it was exactly what the Father said to teach.

**“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” (John 7:18)**

This is true of all authority. Whenever a person seizes authority the goal is to seek his own glory. Our ministry presents a conference called “Union With Christ.” It’s about the battle we all fight, the flesh versus Spirit battle; it’s about authority in our lives. The entire purpose that we Christians abandon the authority that we have given God in our lives and move in our own authority (our flesh) is to glorify ourselves.

When we choose to protect ourselves rather than depend on His armor....on God as a strong tower we glory in our own ability to protect ourselves and reject Him and what He can do. When we choose to provide for ourselves rather than depend on His provision.... on God as Jehovah-Jireh, we glory in our own ability to provide for ourselves and reject Him and what He can do.

In John 7:18 Jesus says, “He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true.” Recently I brought up the concept that Jesus was teaching about the law in the New Testament. He was teaching old covenant principles for the purpose of showing how the law fails to make men righteous because it demands perfection and no man can be perfect.

Jesus is in Judea where people who teach the Law (part of which commands us in this way: “Thou shalt not murder”) are plotting to murder Jesus...an innocent man.

**“Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law?”  
(John 7:19a)**

He says, basically, “none of you keep the law perfectly.” John 7:19 continues:

**“Why do you seek to kill Me?” (John 7:19b)**

The word “seek” means to want something so badly it is almost a form of worship. Isn’t that interesting?

**“The people answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’” (John 7:20)**

Basically they are saying a demon is making Him think someone is seeking to kill Him. I wonder what it was like for the Jewish leaders who really were planning to kill him to hear that. Sometimes God will give people many chances to repent and it amazes me how many times they know they are busted and go on doing it anyway.

**“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I did one work, and you all marvel.’” (John 7:21)**

Jesus speaks of how the Pharisees were up in arms because He healed a man on the Sabbath. He’s about to show them that there are occasions where their interpretation of the law actually causes them to violate the same law.

**“Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.”  
(John 7:22)**

The circumcision was a symbolic act that identified a person with the group.

**“If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?” (John 7:23)**

Jesus made a man completely well on the Sabbath. The term “completely well” is interesting. It means that even things that were wrong with the man Jesus healed that no one suspected, let’s say, allergies or sinus problems also were healed. I find that to be *really cool*.

**“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)**

What is the source of righteous judgment? It’s the throne of heaven. Once again Jesus is saying, “Heavenly things are superior to earthly things”.

**“Now some of them from Jerusalem said, ‘Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?’”  
(John 7:25-26)**

They were wondering if they had heard wrong...if the rulers really wanted to kill Jesus.

**“However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.” (John 7:27)**

The people are wrestling with so much stress here. They want to see the Christ. They wonder why the rulers want to kill Jesus. They think He might be the Christ yet they also think He might not be the Christ. You can see the effect that the rulers had on the people by not being upright. See the uncertainty and the unrest brought on by bad spiritual leaders.

**“Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, ‘You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.’”  
(John 7:28)**

John says that Jesus “cried out”. This literally means that Jesus “screamed.” There are several places where Jesus cries out. This is a very different Jesus from the tame Jesus we see in the movies. We must remember that over and over Jesus is contrasting the earthly and the heavenly. Do these people REALLY know where He is from?

He says, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from...” They know where His earthly home is but not where He is **really** from: “and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.”

**“But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.” (John 7:29)**

Spiritual jealousy is a curious thing. Jesus is merely telling the truth about His spiritual relationship with the Father. He's not bragging; He's simply stating the facts. What is their response?

**“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (John 7:30)**

They wanted to seize Him and arrest Him. Why? It was spiritual jealousy. We see it all the time in the world. Non-Christians attack us because we're the children of Truth. Fellow Christians attack others who seem to have a more vibrant spiritual life. It's simple jealousy.

John says that Jesus' hour “had not yet come.” I know the exact moment I will die. This is a startling statement, isn't it? I don't know when I will die from the perspective of a time line, in terms of date and minute. Yet, I know it from knowing the Father to some degree. I will die precisely when He says so and not a moment before nor not a moment after. Because of this I do not fear death. I trust God. He knows best.

Jesus wasn't seized that day simply because the Father said it wasn't time. When He finally **was** arrested it wasn't because His luck had finally run out. It was because Father said it was time. Many of us strive to make things happen or not happen. We have the right to do that in our own lives but we cheat ourselves out of His best when we live that way.

In Acts 15, the disciples say something curious:

**“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials...” (Acts 15:28 NASB)**

I consider that idea a lot: “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us...” It speaks of a partnership in which the leader is God the Holy Spirit. In order to live the Spirit directed life, i.e. walking in the Spirit, we **must** heed His guiding so that we might more fully benefit from His being in our lives.

**“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” (John 7:30)**

Walking in the Spirit, Jesus experienced what the Father had in store for Him.

**“And many of the people believed in Him, and said, ‘When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?’” (John 7:31)**



Jesus seems to always have this effect on people. Some believe while some don't. Both are active choices. No one really remains neutral.

**“The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.’” (John 7:32-34)**

This phrase is curious because it seems to be in contrast to these passages:

**“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.” (Matthew 7:7-8 NASB)**

**“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33 NASB)**

**“You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.” (John 7:34)**

The key difference lies in the matters of motive and heart. If we seek Jesus as the Christ we **will** find Him, both the King and the Kingdom. However, if we seek Him to prove Him to be something else we will not find Him. Why? We won't be able to go to where He is.

**“Then the Jews said among themselves, ‘Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?’” (John 7:35)**

This is an excellent example of earthly thinking. They were thinking He meant to escape the realm of the Pharisees and go to other parts of the world where Jews were living in order to teach them.

**“What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?’” (John 7:36)**

We now come to one of my favorite verses in this book. The scene before us is happening during the Feast of Tabernacles, which feast lasted eight days. On the first day and every day after, **except** the last day, a priest would do something to

commemorate the event detailed in Exodus 17:1-7 in which water flowed from a rock in the wilderness.

The priest would stand in front of the Temple and pour water on a rock from a golden pitcher and he would quote this from Zechariah:

**“And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem...” (Zechariah 14:8 NASB)**

The people would chant Isaiah 12:3 in response:

**“Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3 NASB)**

They would do this for seven days but on the last day they would not chant that; instead they would pray for rain. This would divert them from their need for living water and they would, basically, settle for rain.

It was on this day during the feast that year that Jesus did something very conspicuous:

**“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.’” (John 7:37)**

You know, Jesus has always and forever craved for us to draw from God. When Jesus stands up that day He is giving voice to God's heart cry, a heart cry that I believe resonates constantly. He is groaning for us, “COME TO ME!” Why? Because He is the only true Source and God loves us so much that nothing but the best (Jesus) will really ever do in His eyes.

Knowing the background to the Feast of Tabernacles helps us to make more sense of what Jesus did that day. His act is made especially meaningful when we see this:

**“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NASB)**

The Rock from which flowed the water that was being celebrated in that ritual **WAS** Christ. He was there supplying that water when Moses would speak to the rock in the wilderness. Enough much needed water would flow from the rock to supply the entire nation. So when Jesus stands up that day and screams: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” it is right and good that He should do this because it is true **REALITY!**

**“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)**

Many verses in the Old Testament point to the Christ as the bringer of life.

**“Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:2-3 NASB)**

**“For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, and My blessing on your descendants; and they will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water.” (Isaiah 44:3-4 NASB)**

**“And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.” (Isaiah 58:11 NASB)**

Returning to John I looked up all the key words in John 7:37-38. See how it sounds when we read it in a way closer to how the original readers saw it:

**“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts (to be dry or thirsty; to ardently desire) , let him come (go to; accompany) to Me and drink. He who believes in Me (be living in; trusts in; literally: rests upon) , as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers (flowing water = water that is good to drink) of living water.’” (John 7:37-38)**

It sounds so rich! Imagine that: rivers of living (“zao”) water. This is a part of our inheritance in Christ. It is an incredible experience to sense the flowing of living water, the Holy Spirit.

**“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:39)**

Once again, it wasn't time.

In many parts of the body of Christ there is a distinct lack of craving for the Holy Spirit. A large portion of the body of Christ is taught that having the Bible is equivalent to having the Holy Spirit because the Word of God is “breathed” by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16.) This is like saying that we have Ernest Hemingway because we have a copy of “The Sun Also Rises”.

In places where this is taught the Spirit can be relegated to a back seat in the church, subject to the puny human ability to remember words in a book. **I LOVE** the written Word of God. It really was literally breathed by the Spirit but the Word given by the Spirit is **NOT** the Spirit.

On the other end of the body of Christ is a portion that wants the Holy Spirit but many seem to not be taught that experiencing the Holy Spirit is directly related to whether or not we believe in Jesus, that is, whether or not we “be living in” Jesus. In other words, many do not live in reliance upon Him and then wonder why they never sense His presence, through the Spirit. They wonder why they never see manifestations of the Holy Spirit - miraculous or otherwise. They wonder why they cannot see the fruit of this Spirit in their lives.

Actively believing in Jesus is foundational yet, it is rarely really taught, more rarely modeled and scarcely practiced. It's no wonder we look so like the world....to the world.

**Father God, speak to us. Reveal those ways we resist relying upon Jesus. Convict us so that we will repent and choose to walk in the Spirit and not after our own flesh. Amen.**

There is a study I will mention briefly here that comes out of Joel. It is a passage that many of us quote in which the Spirit's power falls. Before that happens the people come to a realization of how pitiful we are without God and throw themselves at God's feet, basically, and **then** the Word says:

**““And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.”  
(Joel 2:28 NASB)**

Dependency upon this all powerful God is always so crucial. It is how we are built to be: dependant upon God.

**“Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet.’ Others said, ‘This is the Christ.’ But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’ So there was a division among the people because of Him.” (John 7:40-43)**

This is interesting to me because Jesus is the Prince of Peace and peace means to unite things formerly together that have been divided. Why, then is Jesus bringing division? It is because in order for us to be united in Him we must first be divided from whatever keeps us from Him. This is why Jesus says this in Luke 12:51: **“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.”** Then He goes on to list a series of alliances that are not Jesus focused.

The Jewish leaders thought, “Now is a great time to snag Jesus!”

**“Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.” (John 7:44)**

They sent temple police to get Him.

**“Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’” (John 7:45)**

Imagine their frustration. They had Him right there!

**“The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’” (John 7:46)**

The policemen said they didn’t arrest Him because of how He taught. That cracks me up!

**“Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived?’” (John 7:47)**

I guess the modern day equivalent would be “IS YOU NUTZ?!?!?”

**“Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” (John 7:48)**



This is fun because we know that at least one, Nicodemus, did so their logic is bad. They were saying, "You are deceived because none of our group believes in Jesus, so there!" It was bad logic.

**"But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." (John 7:49)**

Spiritual pride is a bad thing. Let's think about what they were saying: "we're the best there are and we don't believe in Him (although, unbeknownst to them, Nicodemus did). Since we, the spiritually awesome, don't believe in Him no one else should either." (The problem is that the people did! The Pharisees said, "those people, being spiritually inferior to us, don't know the law like we do; so they are cursed.")

The problem with this is, of course, that the people were right. What I often see in the body of Christ is that some of us think that there are levels of excellence in the church that some are better than others, which means that some are superior to others. We construct a "Christian caste system" that God hates and down near the bottom is someone who is not as good as someone else, in our minds. Often it includes people who are poor, or not well educated or new Christians.

The people who were drawn to Jesus, responded to Him and believed in Him were on the mark. The educated ones were completely wrong about Jesus - tragically wrong. One Pharisee, who was coming to believe, spoke up....a lone voice of reason.

**"Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 'Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?'" (John 7:50-51)**

This should give us hope. Whenever we walk with the Lord we are awakened to the reality that some groups of people will be harder to touch with the gospel than others. As we become free we are awakened to the reality that some groups of people will be harder to touch with freedom in Christ. As we move in the Spirit more and more freely we are likewise awakened to the reality that some groups of people will resist the Holy Spirit more and more.

The Pharisees seem to be a group in which I would think there is little or no hope that they would respond to Jesus at all yet, this one is responding and that gives me hope. It really is judgment to say, "the \_\_\_\_\_s will never receive the Holy Spirit" (fill in the blank with a group name with which you are familiar.)

Our part is to minister Jesus, freedom, the Holy Spirit to whomever Father leads us. It's His part to affect people.

**“They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’” (John 7:52)**

When a person rises up for Jesus and against an institution, they are suspect. The first response of the suspicious ones is to say, “Are you where He is from?” Then they say, “No prophet has come out of Galilee.....go check!”

Guess what? They are wrong.

**“But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.” (Isaiah 9:1-2 NASB)**

That is a prophecy speaking of the Messiah but Jonah also was from there:

**“He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.”  
(2 Kings 14:25 NASB)**

So was Elijah.

**“Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.’” (1 Kings 17:1 NASB)**

Sometimes the “spiritual experts” are wrong.

**“And everyone went to his own house.” (John 7:53)**

In the end of John chapter 7 we see that the Pharisees, too, were divided by Jesus.

**Father, we thank You for this time to study Your word. Thank You for the power and insight that You pour out on us as we study Your Word. We ask that You increase that. Father, fill us full and over full with Your Holy Spirit. Help us to marvel at Your Son. Help us to marvel at the works of His hands. Father, thank You that heavenly is better than earthly. Thank You that walking after the Spirit is better than walking after the flesh. Thank You for Your love, Your patience and Your guidance toward us.**

**Father thank You that You care for us Your children. Thank You that we can come before You with our requests. Father, we thank You for Your living water, Your living word. Thank You that You came to divide. Thank You for Your leading. Thank You for Your provision. Father, be near to us; be big in us as we walk out this life You gave. In the marvelous name of Your son, Jesus. Amen.**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**Father, thank You for this time to open Your word. Send Your Holy Spirit in power to teach, to heal, to comfort, to give understanding and revelation. Thank You for Your Word and for how it teaches us and directs us deeper into a dependant relationship with You. We thank You for the presence of Your Holy Spirit as we read the Scriptures. Increase our faith. Cause the cares of the day to fall away and YOU to be our focus. Show us Your Power. Show us Your love. Be our life and breath, Father. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.” (John 8:1-2)**

I love this image. Jesus is sitting in a casual atmosphere teaching people who want to be taught. Nothing is forced on anyone. There is freedom.

**“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Corinthians 3:17 NASB)**

Wherever the Lord is....there is freedom.

**“Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.” (John 8:2)**

The word for “teach” is the word from which we get the term “didactic”. It means to “teach in a discussion style”.

**“Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.” (John 8:2)**

Jesus sat there and bantered back and forth with people. He talked **with** them. Once after I preached in a church building a young man came up after and gave me one of the best compliments I have ever gotten. He said, “It was so nice to be spoken with and not talked down to.”

I believe that when Jesus taught He spoke with people and not down to them.

**“Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.” (John 8:3)**

When that poor woman was brought there to be killed the leaders of Israel said this:

**“And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.’” (John 8:4)**

This told Jesus that the leaders who had “caught” her had laid in wait, choosing not to prevent her sin...choosing, instead, to let her do it. They did this so they could use her and stone her to death. They were willing to sacrifice her.

You might imagine that she might be scantily clad. Apparently she really **was** guilty of having sex outside her marriage but the leaders of Israel caught her. How did that happen? This is a really bad thing.

The rule for this was that those doing the catching were to hide and watch and see if adultery was really happening. So, the leaders of Israel...the shepherds of Israel who had been given the task of shepherding the sheep, the people (God’s favorite thing) who knew how badly adultery hurt people and the nation were willing to let this happen. Instead of doing their job, which was to step in and prevent it, they were willing to sacrifice this woman to keep their influence by trapping Jesus. One of the sheep they were supposed to care for was worth sacrificing.

Can you see how infuriated Jesus might have been? Sometimes the self control of Jesus amazes me.

There is someone else that should be stoned to death on that temple floor that is missing. Where’s the man? It’s impossible for a woman to commit adultery without a man to do that with her yet there is none here. Apparently he was allowed to slip away.

Perhaps the whole thing was a setup designed to snare a woman to be used to trap Jesus in His interpretation of what should be done to her which makes their sin as shepherds seem so much more insidious. We see this over and over in the world today: spiritual leaders who are willing to sacrifice the people they are to serve in order to get theirs. This is spiritual cannibalism and God hates it.

We see Jesus in this passage, holy and pure, the King of the Universe and at His feet is sin personified a woman caught in the act of sex outside of her marriage.



Scattered around Him is sin personified: a group of lost people. In the most essential sense, except for Jesus, she is no better or worse than anyone else there.

The main thing I would like us to see is that Jesus knows EXACTLY what she has done and that Jesus knows EXACTLY what the others have done. What is His response to all this? Truth.

**“Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” (John 8:5)**

This is a trap. They are trying to get Jesus to choose to either align Himself with Moses and them or against Moses. Either way would cost Him. Jesus, though, is out of the box and He sees another alternative. The lesson here is that it's not a good idea to try to trap a person with intimate access to an all-knowing Father.

Truth is that in a way we fit that description too; we too have intimate access to an all-knowing Father. If we trusted Him more than we trust our own devices we wouldn't be nearly as able to be ambushed as we have been. Jesus sees another alternative and I think we should be aware that that is always a possibility.

**“This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.” (John 8:6)**

Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear them at all. It's important to understand that we never HAVE to respond. We almost always want to but we never **have** to respond. Jesus chose to not be driven by their two choices of traps. He simply didn't participate.

He stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. When we try to manipulate someone with our flesh and they won't play we find ourselves trying to do the same thing over and over. We are so convinced that our flesh is able.

These guys try that on Jesus.

**“So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’” (John 8:7)**

The first part is this: all people are guilty of sin. Then Jesus saves the woman's life and then He applies the rest of the truth for this.

**“When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’”**  
**(John 8:10-11)**

Jesus points out that all sin and fall short of the glory of God and then He saves the woman and encourages her to not sin in the future. That is His message for us too.

**“Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20 NASB)**

All of us struggle with sin. No one lives a sin free life. Jesus saves us anyway and then He encourages us to not sin habitually in the future.

Here we watch the Pharisees keep asking Jesus the same thing over and over. He rises and says, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” When people are busy accusing someone of something that is where their focus is. This is the nature of judgment: focusing on someone else’s sin while choosing not to focus on our own.

The Holy Spirit, through Jesus, convicts them which is really only a matter of drawing their focus to their pile of offenses. He rises and says, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

**“And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.” (John 8:8)**

This is one of the great mysteries of the new testament: what the heck did He write there?!?! Only He knows. All we know is the effect this encounter with Jesus had on her accusers.

**“Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” (John 8:9)**

They were convicted by their own conscience. That word “conscience” is an interesting word; it means “co-perception.” Literally, it means that they began to perceive their own situation with God’s perception. In other words, they touched the mind of Christ. Then they left, one at a time. It started with the oldest which doesn’t really mean the oldest in age, it means the senior Sanhedrin member and the “last” means the least important in an earthly sense. So all that is left is a woman caught in adultery and Jesus.

Can you imagine how powerful that scene was? Can you sense what a loss and how humiliating this was to the Sanhedrin, to have their power dribble away like that? I say it like this because their power was all flesh power always is: the ability to cause others to do one's bidding. As each person left the collective power of those remaining dribbled away.

Let's look at it from the woman's angle. She was going to commit adultery which might have been planned or might have been a sin of convenience, something that just popped up. The next thing you know she's basically a dead woman. It's just a matter of waiting for the stones to start falling on her. She was dead and then Jesus intervenes and all the other people drop away. She finds herself alone with Jesus, her Judge.

When we were lost, dead and sentenced to forever death Jesus intervened and when we die physically....all the other people will drop away and we will find ourselves alone with Jesus, our Judge. The parallel strikes me. Satan and his angels will no longer be there doing what they have always done: accusing us. Our accusers will drop away and we will find ourselves alone with Jesus – finally.

**“When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’” (John 8:10)**

Jesus will ask us, “Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”

I think this is awesome.

**“She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’” (John 8:11)**

We will say, as she did, “There is no one left to accuse us, Lord” and, since we are in Jesus and therefore cleansed of sin Jesus will say to us, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” Then off we will go to heaven. What Jesus does with this woman is a foreshadowing of ourselves and Him at the judgment.

Let's remember the mechanics of what has just happened. They were trying to set Jesus up and were willing to kill this woman in the process. She bought into the trap so legalistically she WAS guilty and worthy of death (just like we were). The accusers presented two alternatives to Jesus: agree with Moses....or not. Jesus was out of the box and had another alternative that caused them to draw back from her, out of rock throwing range.

**“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)**

Jesus addresses them. His response to all this is to identify Himself with what He just manifested: spiritual illumination. “I am the light of the world.” Literally He says, “I am the manifestation of illuminating light in the world.”

This is what Jesus is: the manifestation of illuminating light in the world. One who follows Him will benefit from that aspect of Jesus. Jesus said, “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” That word “follows” is a Greek word that means “to be in the same way with; to accompany.”

One who accompanies light, then, will have light and not just any light the light of life (zoe); therefore, this one will not walk in darkness. That word “walk” is a Greek word that basically means “to have a habitual lifestyle of.” So, one who accompanies Jesus will not have a habitual lifestyle typified by darkness rather, that person will have light because of what Jesus is (light).

It is a rich statement. The Pharisees were lawyers. They were very legalistic. Jesus has testified about Himself. Why? Who else on the earth had the ability to really testify on exactly what He is? No one; only He had been with Him forever. The Pharisees were used to having witnesses come to testify on someone’s behalf so they make an error in logic.

**“The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’” (John 8:13)**

They assume that if He testifies of Himself He cannot be telling the truth. Their problem is that they are used to being around liars. They can’t conceive of the idea that He just might be telling the truth about Himself. They accuse Jesus of lying. It’s not good to say things like this to Jesus but when He prophesies through someone and we refuse to receive it or if we disagree with it, we do that same thing.

Jesus’ response is really about what one knows:

**“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.’” (John 8:14)**

He basically says, “Your ignorance is trumped by what I know” (“ignorance” merely meaning “a lack of knowing”). He narrows down His point to the basic reality of why they are wrong; it is their standard that is incorrect:

**“You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” (John 8:15)**

They judge according to the flesh. He says, “You judged according to the flesh.” I used to think that this meant “You judge based on what you can observe” but I see it differently now. It means “you judge according to (in obedience to) YOUR flesh.” Their flesh is setting the tone here, not the adulterous woman or Jesus.

True, the flesh does focus on the seen but its true motivation is SELF protection and SELF provision and they are obeying that in themselves. Jesus points something else out there.

**“You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” (John 8:15)**

Only the Pharisees were in the judgment biz that day. Jesus judged no one, He just asked questions and made statements.

**“And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.” (John 8:16)**

But He does say, “if I DID judge I would judge perfectly - openly (true)” and the reason is that He would be judging in the Spirit (“for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me”).

**“It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.” (John 8:17)**

Jesus is about to reveal just how out of the box He really is. I’m coming to understand that if we really follow Him we often come to these same places where we must rise up against law, even gently, in the religious institutions. When we reveal just how out of the box we are (in Christ) they will be tempted to do to us, in some way, what they did to Jesus.

**“It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.” (John 8:17)**

Jesus presents the “two men” He has in mind.



**“I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.” (John 8:18)**

If we live transparent lives we bear witness of ourselves and then the Father will also do that for us. Not everyone will recognize that this is what is happening but I find comfort and joy in the idea of the Father testifying on my behalf.

**“Then they said to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.’” (John 8:19)**

Jesus is going full bore in speaking things as they are but not in earthly terms. The difference between Him and everyone else is starting to become VERY evident. He speaks of His heavenly Father. They ask about where His father is, thinking maybe about Joseph or an earthly father figure **like** Joseph.

Sometimes I think that everything Jesus did wasn't really for the benefit of the people there with Him at the moment. He would say things that were definitely going over their heads. I know that if we were there we wouldn't get what He was saying either but we have the benefit of the Word.

This is one of those times when the idea is just flying right over their heads. They have no idea what He is really saying but its truth just the same and He **has** to say it. There is an important truth in there for us.

**“Then they said to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.’” (John 8:19)**

Jesus says, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” In Philippians 3 Paul says that he wants to know Christ. He presents it as something we can all attain: the knowing of Jesus and I think we all can. We can attain this in the same way he presents it in Philippians 3. We can know Christ by experiencing Jesus through depending upon Him through the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death and attaining to His resurrection.

It means to cast down our own flesh and walk in the Spirit ever more consistently and when we do we will come to know Jesus better. Jesus said, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” So, when we come to know Him better we will know the Father.

**“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” (John 14:6)**

Why did He say things like He does in John 8:19? I think it is for the benefit of the disciples later and the members of the early church and for us. The gist of that statement: “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also” is that in the actions, thoughts, sayings, attitudes, etc. of the earthly Jesus we can know the Father.

This is why I often recommend that people read this book, the Gospel of John, slowly and when they do to try to “see” Jesus at work. See what matters to Him. See how He does things. See what He does and says and what other things He **could** have said and done but chooses not to do and say. Everything is important.

I’ve been asked how one can determine what Jesus would not have done or said. As we read the Word and hang out with Him patterns emerge. He **is** creative but you can see trends in how Jesus does things. I’ll give an analogy from my personal life.

Recently someone told a friend that I had done something that I obviously hadn’t done. The person he told it to knows me, has experienced me, knows what I am about, what I believe, what offends me and what delights me. That person **KNEW** it wasn’t something I would do.

The breakdown with that analogy is that I am not Jesus and I do make mistakes and do sin, etc. so it’s possible that I had done it, being a mere human. But Jesus isn’t like that. Jesus is consistently Jesus, perfect, true and worthy of our trust. Other than that, the analogy holds.

The men in John 8:19 did not know Jesus, therefore they did not know the Father. This is why I do several things regarding this in my ministry. One is to recommend that people read John so they can have a better chance of knowing Jesus. There is, though, a better way to know Jesus. To really know anyone we must have a chance to experience that person and the best way I know to experience someone is to depend upon that person. Let’s look at that passage in Philippians now.

**“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to**

**His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:8-11 NASB)**

The Apostle Paul’s heart cry for himself was to KNOW Jesus, the Protector and the Provider, the Savior and according to Paul that would happen via a lifestyle. It would involve what we seek to avoid: “sufferings” and “death”. We desire to find all kinds of reasons to protect ourselves. If we do that we cheat ourselves out of chances to rely on Jesus to be our strong tower and our rock and our provision. We cheated ourselves out of a chance to know Jesus.

**“You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” (John 8:19b)**

They didn’t know Him.

**“These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.” (John 8:20)**

The only reason He wasn’t killed right then was that the Father said it wasn’t yet time. I know exactly when I will die: its precisely when the Father says it is time for me to die and not a minute sooner and not a minute later. Therefore, I never worry about that. I’ve had many of what seemed to be close calls; it simply wasn’t time.

Next, Jesus says something very harsh but true. (Sometimes truth is like that.)

**“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’” (John 8:21)**

How would you like to hear this from Jesus? : You “will die in your sin”. Wow! Basically He is saying, “You cannot get to heaven.”

**“So the Jews said, ‘Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?’” (John 8:22)**

The Jews are still thinking in an earthly way. They think He is talking suicide. Jesus is drawing a line; it’s time to throw off the gloves. He is a heavenly being (the only one on the earth at the time) – they are terminally earth-bound. This won’t be pretty!

**“And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.’” (John 8:23-24)**

He is really saying, “When it is all said and done you will not believe (be living) in Me.” He is looking at them and the Father is telling Him, “These will never receive You.”

**“Then they said to Him, ‘Who are You?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.’” (John 8:25)**

We can almost see them turning their heads sideways and asking, “Who **ARE** you?”

To which beginning does Jesus refer? I believe He is saying that from the foundation of the earth He has been declaring who He is.

**“I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.” (John 8:26)**

Where is He getting this stuff? The Father is speaking it to Him.

**“They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.” (John 8:27)**

All this time His disciples were with Him....listening. Imagine having spent three years with Him and He says this next thing:

**“Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.’” (John 8:28)**

This was a common Greek term - “lift up”. Everyone who heard it there knew it referred to crucifixion. Imagine living with Jesus for three years. You know He is amazing You think He is the messiah. You hope He will rule as an earthly king and one day He says, “when (not if) I am crucified....” Imagine how that pretzelized their brains.

**(Writer's note: "pretzelized" is a term I use to describe things that are so unexpected and unfathomable that it twists your noodle into knots like a pretzel.)**

Jesus says, "when I am lifted up...you will know that I am". There the "I am" again. The term "I am He" refers directly to Him being the Son of Man. I think it would be very cool to be taught by the Father. I think it IS cool that this virtually happens when we are led by the Spirit. A lot more happens when we walk by the Spirit than we realize.

**"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." (John 6:44-45)**

The Father initiates, Jesus decrees and the Spirit performs. The Father wants to teach us that Jesus decrees that it is so and the Spirit does it in our lives when we cooperate with Him. When we ask God to guide us, change us, teach us, grow us, etc. we are literally inviting Him to teach us personally through the entire Godhead.

When Paul says this:

**"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."  
(Philippians 4:8-9 NASB)**

He is talking about this very dynamic. In an effort to teach us the traditional "church" has broken the Godhead into manageable parts, as it were. This is done so we can grasp Him or, really, to see Him in human terms. What happens is that despite all the good intentions we lose sight of the fact that all of God is involved with us at all times.

**Father, I pray that as You teach us we will sense that Your hand is in our lives and we will grasp the thrill and the honor and the gift of that: that Father wants to personally teach us! How many of us grieve that we didn't have that kind of access to our earthly fathers? Yet You want to teach us. You are the**



**Ultimate Father. Thank You Father. We pray this in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.**

The writer of Hebrews shows us something about this Father we have in heaven, something about how different He is.

**“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”  
(Hebrews 12:7 NASB)**

The Greek word translated as “discipline” is a painful rebuke that is really for the purposes of teaching us.

**“But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”  
(Hebrews 12:8 NASB)**

He says that we are God's children, children of the Father. If not, we would be illegitimate.

**“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?” (Hebrews 12:9 NASB)**

When our earthly fathers corrected us they got something out of the deal: respect. When the Father of Spirits (I LOVE that term!) corrects us **we** get something: we live.

**“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.”  
(Hebrews 12:10 NASB)**

Our earthly fathers corrected us for their benefit. In contrast, our heavenly Father corrects us so that we will benefit: we will have, literally: will seize and make our own His holiness. All this to say that it is good to learn from the Father and that if a teacher or a friend is teaching by the Spirit of God that is exactly what is happening: the Father is teaching us through that person.

I love that. I really do.

In John 8, everything Jesus is saying about Himself and the Father's involvement with Him is true of us if we walk in the Spirit:

**“Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.’” (John 8:28-29)**

When we walk by the Spirit we are not alone....the Father is with us.

**“‘And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.’ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.” (John 8:29-30)**

Let’s think about this. Jesus is putting Himself in danger for the benefit of others and He gets to see the results. When He said this many of the people started to believe Him, started to “be living in Him.” So He addressed them.

Jesus reveals a way to be. We are to be imitators of Jesus. When some received Him He addressed them. He went where invited.

**“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’” (John 8:31)**

The Greek word translated here as “abide” means to “continue in.....to consistently live it.” I think that’s just how it works. A real disciple of Jesus just can’t help but live it out. The word “logos” means “something said” and “disciples” means “pupils or learners.”

I have witnessed a lot of things in the body of Christ. One is that people are always trying to come up with formulas like the test people use to see if we are still saved. We will watch others or even ourselves to see what can be seen in a person’s observable behavior and then decide if they are still a part of the club.

I see people judging themselves and others to not be Christians anymore based on whether or not they seem to do what Jesus said to do all the time. A lot of it seems to stem from an interpretation of this verse: **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”**

We take the verse and go further with it then Jesus did. We add to the Word of God by saying, “and if you don’t abide in His word then you aren’t His disciple and that means that you are lost.” That’s not what the verse says and I don’t believe it was meant to be a test of fellowship.

It is a simple statement: **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”** It is those who are disciples (learners) who will take what Jesus says (including what He is still saying through the Holy Spirit) in the Bible and abide in it.....continue in it.....consistently live it.

It is judgment to say that if a person, even if it is me saying it about me, falls down or is burdened and fails to continue in or to consistently live in what Jesus says that this person obviously is not saved. If we should fall like that we need others to stand with us and bear that burden and help us regain our footing. This is precisely why satan serves up platters of hopelessness and causes us to withdraw from the body of Christ when we fail.

We **MUST** resist this in our own lives and in the lives of others by reaching out to those who draw back, always respecting their core rights to withhold themselves from the body if they truly want that. Still, we must try. This is love.

**“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” (John 8:31-32)**

Since Jesus is the Way, Truth and the Life this verse tells us that we will come to know Jesus and when He sets us free we will be free indeed (in deed, free in what we do). This means that we will have the freedom to do righteous acts, whichever righteous act we should choose to do. It means that no matter how tough the truth is at times it still sets us free. Living in truth, believing in the truth (Jesus) is sometimes a hard road to walk but worth it!

Many people don't know they aren't free. They are so used to being in bondage they think its freedom. They are earthbound.

**“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)**

We've seen that “the truth” is not a list of facts. I was once banned forever from an internet chat channel. It was a channel for the denomination in which I was saved. When I made it known that I no longer went to that kind of church the channel leader went after me. He wanted to know why I had left his denomination (subset of the complete body of Christ.)

I asked him, “Why do you still go there?” He replied, “We have the truth.” I said, “You have the truth?” and he said, “I do.” I asked, “How much of the truth do you have?”, knowing he was saying he knew all spiritual things and had God nailed down on them all, which I think is a VERY dangerous position to take.

He said that he had all the truth. I asked, “Did you have all the truth when you were 20?” to which He replied that he did. He was 35 at the time and this led me to ask my next question: “So, you haven’t learned anything spiritual in the last 15 years?” He said that, of course, he had, sensing the presence of a trap. So I said, “This means that when you were 20 you had all the truth minus what you have learned in the past 15 years but **now** you really have all the truth.”

The man said, “I guess so.” I asked him if he thought he would live to be 50 and he said he thought so. My next question is what got me kicked out of his channel forever: “So, you don’t expect to learn anything spiritual in the next 15 years since you now have all the truth?”

My point is this: if the truth is just information that God knows, how can we know all that? His mind is so vast. He knows ALL things!

**“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”  
(John 8:32)**

However, if the Truth is a Person we **can** know that Person and it is in the knowing Him we will be made free. It is the relationship, not the facts, that saves us.

So much of Christendom is obsessed with knowing information and I agree that if God said it, we need to know it but so many “church” services are nothing but appetizers that lead to the main meal of a lecture...the mere transmission of information, lists, rules and laws. We cannot truly know God from knowing what He thinks about things because we cannot process all He thinks about things **but**, we **can** know God through depending on Him and seeing Him come through in our lives. When we practice that consistently we come to know Him more consistently and that process frees us.

**“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”  
(John 8:32)**

The term “make free” literally means “will deliver”. It refers to real, long lasting deliverance that we can enjoy and experience every day. Everyday deliverance comes from knowing Jesus which, in turn, comes from entrusting ourselves to Him.

I wonder how many Christians are living in bondage because they protect themselves or try to do that. Many people in “churches” are in bondage because they will not accept Christians other than themselves. They trust their own ability

to make sure they “stay saved” by excluding people who are saved but believe differently than they do. So they stay bound up.

How can we be saved if we won't let go of what we are holding onto in our bondage? Consider a man who is adrift at sea. He is lost....in danger. He is holding onto a piece of driftwood. It has kept him alive but is not salvation. A ship comes up and someone onboard throws out a life ring. In order for the man to realize his deliverance from bondage to that driftwood he **HAS** to let go and grab hold of that life ring with both hands.

**“They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be made free’?’” (John 8:33)**

They are thinking in an earthly way. I suppose they forgot all about Pharaoh and Babylon and what was their political situation when Jesus was there? They were under Roman occupation. This sounds like bondage to me. I've noticed something curious about many people who are in bondage. They don't know they are in bondage.

We get so used to being in our situation that it seems normal to us

These people didn't get that they were in political bondage as a people. They **certainly** didn't get that they were in spiritual bondage!

**“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” (Ephesians 2:1-3 NASB)**

Who among us has been in spiritual bondage? Perhaps it would be easier to ask “who among us has NOT been in spiritual bondage?” In all of time only Jesus was not.

**“Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.’” (John 8:34)**

This is such a basic truth: slaves to sin don't know they are slaves. They think they just are this way and its because we were born into it. Then a Christian comes along and quotes her favorite verse and they look at us like we have lobsters



hanging out of our ears. It just does not make sense to them **until** they are saved and free. Then they can look back and see the shackles lying at the foot of the cross - the ones that used to be binding them.

I remember that when I was born again I felt SO GOOD. I thought that I wasn't so bad before I was saved, that my problem then was that I just wasn't going to heaven if I died lost. Then the Lord did something really good for me that sure DIDN'T FEEL GOOD: He showed me some of my sin from before I was saved.

I was SHOCKED when I remembered that I had done all that stuff. Why did I do all that? It is because back then I thought it was normal. I thought it was me. I was a slave to sin, so I lived like one.

Who has been a slave of sin? Romans 3:23 says we all have been slaves to sin. **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”**

**“...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin...” (Romans 6:6 NASB)**

Jesus died and gave us a chance to be baptized into Him, to be crucified with Him specifically so that we would no longer be slaves of sin.

**“for he who has died is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:7 NASB)**

Now, in Christ, we have a choice. We get to choose our master.

**“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that?” (Romans 6:12-16 NASB)**

May we receive and learn this truth in every aspect of our lives: **“we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free.”**

**“And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.” (John 8:35)**

Let's think about this. Jesus is making a distinction between sons and slaves. He is specifically saying that, as new creations in Christ we never have been sons of satan. The new people we are in Christ never have truly belonged to satan.

**“And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.” (John 8:35)**

A son would have to stay but a slave can leave.

**“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”  
(John 8:36)**

When Jesus looked at people what He saw were slaves. When Jesus looks at lost people today what He sees are slaves. When Jesus looks at saved people today who are under attack what He sees are slaves. Slaves can be freed. How? They can be bought or their owners can be conquered. This is why Jesus frees people.

After the Emancipation Proclamation was in effect American slaves were truly free but many chose to remain in bondage. Someone had freed them but they chose to not use their new freedom to move. They were freed in reality but they still lived in bondage. The same is true when Jesus frees slaves. As former slaves to sin we were freed when we were born again so we are truly free. If we remain functionally bound up its because we don't know we are free....forever free.

What many call “deliverance ministry”, then, is simply a matter of revealing to a Christian that they were freed once and for all when they were born again. Many religious systems, though, resist that and a person's love for a religious system will prevent them from ever walking in freedom.

If people love their beliefs more than they love Jesus, the Deliverer, a person might not knowingly choose to stay in bondage but they **will** deliberately choose to love a system of belief more than Jesus and **that** will keep them functionally in bondage. Humility, repentance and faith in Jesus rather than in some human's ideas is the antidote.

These systems teach that if a person is still in bondage it must be because they are still lost or, incredibly, lost again. They cannot repent of an unbiblical idea and remain superior to other religious systems that don't agree. Therefore, their people remain in bondage. I hate that.

We are made free when we were born again.

**“...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”  
(Romans 6:6-7 NASB)**

The Holy Spirit, Who has an excellent command of the Greek language, wrote this through Paul in the past tense. A person who has died IN CHRIST has BEEN freed from sin. Its a done deal.

**“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him..”  
(Romans 6:8-9 NASB)**

Paul goes on to say that since this is a done deal we are to live that way. We should act free since we ARE free. Its really very simple.

In Galatians Paul says:

**“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”  
(Galatians 5:1 NASB)**

We are to stand firm in the freedom that Jesus caused to happen (past tense) when we were saved. A big part of “standing firm” has to do with not accepting sinful doctrines that say that if we mess up we are obviously not dead in Christ anymore. We are to trust His finished work and not our own ability to sin or not sin.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

**“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.” (John 8:36-37)**

The people to whom Jesus was speaking had trusted in an earthly thing for their spiritual well-being: their earthly relationship with a person, Abraham. Jesus said, “I know you share a bloodline with him but you seek to kill Me for a reason: because My word has no place in you.”

The term “has no place in you” means that it “just passes through them”. They don’t receive it; they don’t make it theirs. Jesus always draws a line: we’re either with Him or against Him.

**“I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” (John 8:38)**

He says, “I say what My father shows me. You, on the other hand is implied, do what YOUR father shows you.”

**“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.’” (John 8:39)**

Jesus is talking about functional fatherhood and sonship. He teaches that we are functionally someone’s son when we habitually do what that person does.

**“‘But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.’ Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father; God.’” (John 8:40-41)**

Some commentary writers think this is a slur toward Jesus about the circumstances of His own birth.

**“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.’” (John 8:42)**

Jesus is basically telling them, “so live it!”

Have you ever noticed how you can tell the basics of Christianity to someone who is not saved and they stare at you like a calf stares at a new gate? You could be speaking Swahili for all they know. This is why I believe that debating with a lost person is a waste of air and our brain cells. They don't know what we are talking about. Many of them love to debate; the problem is that without Jesus faith is not logical. So we're on different planes.

One man I pastor put it like this: “Jesus did not say ‘go into all the world and win debates.’”

**“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.” (John 8:43)**

Jesus is NOT winning friends and influencing people (in a nice way).

Many people present a nice-nice Jesus and He IS nice. After all, He is love but what does that mean? It means that He will do and say whatever is necessary to ensure that we will get what we need and we need Jesus. Those people needed Jesus and the ideas and spirits running those Pharisees and Sadducees were anti-Christ ideas and spirits. Jesus was head-butting them. It was worth it because the stakes are high: human souls and I think that's how we must be too.

Jesus is gentle when the situation calls for gentleness and we should be the same but Jesus is harsh and direct when the situation calls for that. The problem I have seen is that Christendom seems to live on the outskirts of the ranges of Christian behavior. Some people are afraid of real and direct ministry so they live in the realm of gentle and perpetual nice-nice and some others are, really, afraid to be sensitive because it hurts and they live in the realm of harshness. If we really are controlled by the Spirit of Christ we will be led to do all approaches on that scale as the situation presents itself.

Here we see Jesus throwing off the gloves and so do the Pharisees.

**“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44)**

That's extremely harsh but true. Jesus is talking about functional fatherhood. Who is our father? It is whoever we follow. Jesus said to them, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.” The word “desire” means “lust after, long for something (especially something forbidden)”.

Let's not miss the identity statement in this verse: Satan is a liar. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources. He is merely being himself. He does....as he is. Jesus is saying that those He was speaking to were “of the devil”. The word “devil” literally means “liar” and “satan” literally means “destroyer.”

Like we saw earlier in this chapter we all used to be children of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3). Before Jesus, we were part of the destroyer. We obeyed him. We did his bidding. Functionally, he was our father. Is that not sobering? This is why we should never look down on the lost.

God has drawn us to Him. We began to listen to Him almost always through a book (the Bible) or through a person and we began to forsake one evil father and draw near to a new father, a good Father. Then we were born again and God



became more than just our functional father. He became our actual, real, forever Father.

When John wrote what we are reading in chapter 8 no one but Jesus is spiritually alive. Some of the people were listening to and hearing Jesus. They were taking on God as their Father but He was addressing this to people who had taken their stand against the Son and, therefore, against the Father.

**“But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.” (John 8:45)**

We have to face it: all we have to offer is Jesus, the Truth and He's not all that popular so we won't be very popular either. There are 2 camps - no grey areas. Either we are in league with the King of Kings or we aren't; if we aren't we have satan as our functional father. If that is our case, when Jesus speaks we won't believe Him. That means we won't “be living Him”.

**“And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2 NASB)**

That's all we have. Apparently He'll do.

**“But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” (John 8:45-46)**

Jesus is all we have. One of the reasons the body of Christ is largely dead in the water is its love affair with its man made programs the true message of which is: “Jesus **ain't** really enough; we need a program.” Sometimes it's “Jesus is good but a program is better” or “We need a program to get people ready for Jesus.”

Meanwhile, Jesus is life! What else does a dead person need? He needs life! That's all!

**“He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:47)**

Many of us are frustrated because, in our thinking, we don't hear God but I believe that all Christians do. Many, though, don't realize that we hear Him. We insist on hearing Him in the manner we want to hear Him. Some of us getting dreams from Him and expect to hear a voice in their heads, don't hear a voice in their heads and discount the dreams. That's why they think they don't hear Him.

I think all His children hear His voice, so I try to minister this in prayer:

**“Father reveal how YOU already are speaking to this child of Yours.”**

**“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:47)**

There is not a lot of grey area there. Jesus draws a line in the sand. They are either with Him, and therefore with God, or they are against God. There comes a time when you know that what you are called to say will get you killed in some form or fashion but God still calls you to say or do it. “Being killed” might mean actually being physically killed or it might mean losing money or a job or funding or a situation or a relationship, etc.

It might cost us something we think we need for life but God still calls you to say or do it or not say or not do it. Why? He is our life. If He calls us to risk it, whatever it is, we don’t really need it or He will provide it some other way.

I truly believe that we go through many deaths as Christians but after every one of them there is a resurrection.

Jesus was putting His physical self at risk and, really, His soul and His spirit was going to be hurt too. When He was killed He literally became our sin and for the only time ever was not in fellowship with the rest of the Godhead. Jesus was putting Himself at great risk in obedience to the Father. Why? He trusted the Father. We can do the same through faith and trust in the Father through Jesus.

So, Jesus said this:

**“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:47)**

In doing so He basically says, “My words are God’s words. You don’t believe them, so you aren’t of God.” Think of the worst cuss word or term you can imagine. What the Jewish leaders say to Jesus as they respond are the worst two things a Jew could say to another Jew.

**“Then the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’” (John 8:48)**

To a Jew a Samaritan was beneath a Jew. Saying this to Jesus was like cussing Jesus to His face. In addition it was somewhat stupid to ask what they think is a demon possessed man if he has a demon because demons lie!

**“Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.’” (John 8:49)**

In the mind of Jesus the opposite of having a demon is to honor the Father. The Greek word translated here as “honor” means to “prize; to consider something to have value; to revere.” Jesus says, “I revere, consider to be valuable, My Father and you consider me to be something “worthy of contempt and shameful treatment.”

**“And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” (John 8:50-51)**

Of course, Jesus is speaking here of spiritual death and not physical death or the other “deaths” we were discussing earlier.

**“Then the Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?’” (John 8:52-53)**

The key here is this statement: “Whom do You make Yourself out to be?” If Jesus was making Himself out to be something He might have had a problem but He was what He was (the Messiah) by the Father's doing. The term “making yourself out to be” something really has to do with authority. Just who authorized Him into that spot?

All godly authority comes from outside us. If we seize authority there is only earthly power behind it. Therefore, there is no heavenly grace supplied. In Matthew 23, Jesus tears into the Pharisees and He starts in a curious way:

**“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;’” (Matthew 23:1-2 NASB)**

What is His first problem with the scribes and Pharisees? **“The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses.”** They authorized

themselves. Later, in Matthew 28 His parting words in that book, which we call the Great Commission, start like this:

**“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” (Matthew 28:18 NASB)**

See the difference? Jesus said, **“All authority *has been given to Me...*”** Jesus understood authority and from where it comes. He had a problem with people who took control of situations that weren't theirs, that took authority not given by God. How hypocritical that people who were doing that would accuse Jesus of such a thing!

**“Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?” (John 8:53)**

Could you imagine asking Jesus something like that? “Whom do You make Yourself out to be?” and His point is: “I make Myself out to be no one.” The Father made Him who He was.

**“Jesus answered, ‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.’” (John 8:54)**

Jesus attacks just that point: if He was making Himself be something He would be nothing but, He stresses, the Father is doing the honoring therefore He IS worthy of honor. Do we as a body typically believe that spiritual mechanism? I don't think we are.

**“For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19 NASB)**

How many Christians see themselves as being “righteous? Not many.

**“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16 NASB)**

We don't typically sees ourselves as being righteous but God refers to Christians as righteous people.

**“...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love...”  
(Ephesians 1:4 NASB)**

**“And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;” (Colossians 3:12 NASB)**

How many Christians see themselves as being “holy”? How many Christians see themselves as being “pure”? Again, not many.

**“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.” (1 Timothy 5:22 - NKJV)**

How would it be possible for us to keep ourselves pure if we aren't intrinsically pure?

In John 8 Jesus said He was worthy of honor...because God made Him honorable

**“Jesus answered, ‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.’”  
(John 8:54)**

We are God's favored children. Why? Because we are; that's as simple as it can be. As He does with Jesus, the Firstborn, He favors us. Therefore, as His children we are worthy of honor and have value, purpose, etc.

If we really live this out we will see ourselves as being righteous, holy and pure and we will begin to live that way. We will simply be what we are, behaving how we are. We won't act holy in hopes that we will somehow become or somehow make ourselves holy. If that were possible we wouldn't need Jesus. But we do need Him. He makes us free, pure, holy, etc. So, let's be what He has made us to be; let's be what He has made us.

**“Jesus answered, ‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.’” (John 8:54-55)**



Jesus doesn't pull any punches. The stakes are high. He calls these men liars, in front of everyone and fairly casually too. The Greek word translated as "liar" means "falsifier."

In the mind of Jesus knowing the Father and keeping His word are inextricably linked. This is true for us; as we know Him we **will** keep His word and it is only through faith, depending upon Him, that we will ever truly know Him. This is why we are so often tempted to not trust Him and to trust ourselves or other people or earthly things instead. We cannot have two masters. Which will we choose? Will we choose something earthly or our God?

**"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56)**

How did Abraham do that?

**"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and as innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore." (Hebrews 11:9-12 NASB)**

Abraham moved. He did things He took risks. Why? God said something would happen sometime in the future. He "saw" this happening with spiritual eyes. God said it, so it would happen. This verse shows how he thought.

**"And Abraham said, 'God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together." (Genesis 22:8 NASB)**

Some people think that this is a prophetic reference to Jesus being the sacrifice that would take away all our sins.

**"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56)**

Abraham somehow got to see this, a glimpse at the reality that out of him and Sarah would come a lineage from which would come Jesus, the Messiah, that God would walk on the earth. This is the day Jesus refers to when He says, "My day."

Jesus is contrasting the reaction of their “father Abraham” with their reaction. Can you imagine what it was like for the ones who resisted Jesus and later realized that they had hassled and eventually killed the very Messiah for which their whole belief system had awaited and prayed for centuries?!?!?!

The Pharisees were concerned about the competition for the hearts of the people. Their eyes were on earthly things. The problem is they saw Jesus as simply another earthly thing. I wonder how often we do this. How often do we pray for something and then when it gets here we regret it or even hate it or simply miss it?

**“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56)**

The word “rejoiced” is a fun word; it literally means “to jump with joy.” And when he saw it he was glad. The Greek word translated as “glad” means “calmly happy or well off”. Doesn’t that sound delicious?

**“Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’” (John 8:57)**

These men are so earthbound as is revealed by their reply: “You aren’t old enough to have seen that!” In a way, they are right. Jesus isn’t OLD; HE simply IS or as He would say it:

**“Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’” (John 8:58)**

Jesus is the I AM. This means that He always and forever was AM’ing, always and forever is AM’ing and always and forever will be AM’ing. This is so important. It’s a concept that I think we really need and will bless us continually. HE JUST IS.

The writer of Hebrews puts it like this:

**“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8 NASB)**

So, when something happened to us: He was there. When we feel alone, HE is with us. Whatever we agonize over, the unknown future, He’s already there busy AM’ing. This has given me a whole new take on omnipresence. It does not just mean that He is in all PLACES at once but it also means He is in all TIME at once too AM’ing, being all powerful and all knowing.

**“Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’” (John 8:58)**

This really ticked the Jews off. I’ve noticed that nothing ticks people off like the truth does. Jesus tells the truth about Himself. So, of course, they try to kill Him!

**“Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” (John 8:59)**

The term “hid Himself” is better translated as “was hidden.” This is cool because it means that God basically gave the people there limited blindness...for a season. He took away their ability to see Jesus physically. It wasn’t time for Him to die yet. He “passed by”, a term that literally means “was lead near” and this is the kind of thing that agonizes me. I really grieve over near misses.

He “passed by”. The Person they had been praying for identified Himself clearly and they let Him “pass by” and they let Him “be lead near.”

**Father God, thank You for You. Thank You for being Love and for Your wisdom and patience and for sharing them with us. Thank You for caring about what matters to us. Thank You Father. We bless Your holy name for....well, just because. You are awesome. You just simply are. Father God, thank You for the revelation we have received as we studied this chapter. Reveal more of Yourself to us. You are wonderful in all Your ways and it is comforting to know that all of You is involved in our spiritual leadership. We are so wonderfully blessed to have You involved in our lives and we truly thank You for that.**

**Reveal to us those ways we resist relying on Jesus. Convict us of that, so that we can repent. Help us to choose life, help us to choose walking in the spirit instead of walking after our own flesh. Father, remind us that Jesus indeed does know. He knows where we are, what’s happening in our lives, good and bad. Help us to come to You daily, hourly or more often if we need that. We want to walk closer to You each day. Thank You for leading us into transparent lives as we yield more to You. Be our guide, be our focus, be our strength. Father we ask that You help us be so yielded to You, that we hear you clearly, and see clearly, and walk after the spirit effortlessly.**

**Increase in us Father, as we decrease. We lift ourselves up to You. You, really, are all that matters. We are blessed that when You are all that**

matters...we matter to You. Father, we thank You that You delight in us Your children. Thank You for this time. We have the Truth; we have Jesus. We want all He has for us. In the awe inspiring name of Jesus we pray this. Amen.

## CHAPTER NINE

**Father, please be with us as we study Your Word. Speak to us, reveal to us tonight anything that You want to show us. Touch our hearts and lives. Make Your Word come alive to us. Please keep distractions to a minimum Father, help us to focus on You. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.”  
(John 9:1)**

Jesus knew why He was there. He knew His mission and what He was to accomplish. All through His ministry, He ministered in such a way that He explained his identity in many ways. In John 4:10 He sits at a well and explains to a Samaritan woman that He can give her “living water.” He feeds 5000 men (plus women and children) with two small loaves of bread and explains that He is the “bread of life” (John 6:35).

At the Feast of Tabernacles which commemorates the water that flowed out of a rock to slake the thirst of the Jews in the wilderness He tells them that they can come to Him and drink (John 7:37) and then later at the same feast in John 8:12, He talks about how, if people follow Him, they will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

***He is the bread of life.***

***He is the living water.***

***He is the light of life.***

**“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” (John 9:2)**

When we resist Jesus He will accomplish what He is here to accomplish. When someone resists Jesus in us He will likewise accomplish what He is here to accomplish. When we resist Jesus we simply miss what we could have experienced or seen.

**“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” (John 9:2)**

People think that every bad thing that happens is a direct result of personal sin. Jesus apparently disagreed. Many times it IS a result of personal sin...but not always, however we have a tendency to think like the disciples did. We think that



what the world calls bad luck or an illness or a birth defect is the direct result of someone's sin. For instance, if a child is stillborn they will think that someone close, like the parents, must have sinned. In truth the malady is related to someone's sin: when Adam chose to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil he invited all this chaos into the world.

**“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22 NASB)**

I don't think that there is a one to one correspondence between a parent's sin and a birth defect. For instance, all children are not born with physical birth defects yet ALL parents have sinned.

**“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”  
(Romans 3:23 NASB)**

I love that God heals people physically and their souls too but really, as captivating as our physical problems can be, that isn't our real problem. When I was a child my grandmother would say, when we were being quiet, “still waters run deep.” In other words, it made her nervous to think about what was happening deep inside us.

The hidden things were potentially dangerous to her. Our real problem was invisible: we were dead in our spirits.

**“Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” (John 9:3)**

Some people have a hard time with this verse, accusing God of being cruel by allowing a man to be blind almost his whole life just so God can be glorified. I believe this event really happened but I also believe that the man represents all people spiritually: we were all blind and are recovering our sight.

One thing to consider is that Jesus didn't have to ever heal him. The man could have remained blind and never know the reason. Jesus' compassion, then, was to choose to do something about it. Another thing to consider is that people blind from birth never really know what they don't have until they miraculously have it.

Imagine this: you're blind and then the first thing you see is the face of the Messiah. I believe we can taste that for ourselves because it is the story of every person born spiritually dead, lame, blind and/or bound up, then we were suddenly

brought to life, healed, given our sight and freed. Sometimes it takes a while for us to realize, to fully receive that but it **is** ours.

I think that the fact that Jesus heals anyone is miraculous. We don't deserve anything except the King says so.

I pray that the Lord would birth that outlook in me, that every single time I see a problem I would see it as an opportunity to see God's hand at work somehow even if I prayed for healing and evident healing didn't happen on demand. When we see a problem and view it as an opportunity to see God we become spiritual possibility thinkers and that means that we look beyond the limitations of the physical. We look into the realm of the Spiritual, where God is only limited by His own promises and His own identity.

**“Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” (John 9:3)**

The Greek word translated here as “revealed” means “rendered apparent.” I think there is a hidden jibe from Jesus in here. He said it was so that “the works of God should be made apparent in him.” One thing He was saying was that the works of God are all around us but we need something miraculous in order to see them.

I would like to encourage us all to spend some time just looking at things and see how often we see the works of God in them. Have you ever held a leaf up to the sun and looked at it? Have you seen the intricacy in that? Have you look at a baby's foot? It is so intricate, so perfect and so detailed. These are works of God.

Sometimes it is almost too overwhelming to me to see it and see what it means: that God took the time to do all this.

This day a blind man would be utilized to make apparent the works of God.

**“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” (John 9:4)**

The works God has planned for us to do aren't really worth anything....if we don't work them.

**“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10 NASB)**

God has prepared good works for each of us not just to do, but to “walk in”. This means that these good works are intended by Father to be our habitual lifestyle. Our enemy is terrified of people rising up into the works God has prepared for them. It is in this that we realize our purpose in Christ: when we are functioning in the body of Christ and in God’s kingdom where HE has always and forever planned that we would be.

God has prepared good works for us to work and if we don’t those good works aren’t worth anything. This is because we won’t energize the grace deposited in them by God to accomplish His will in each of those circumstances; however, but when we do them, God manifests....makes apparent....His works through us.

**“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” (John 9:4)**

When Jesus speaks of night and day here He is talking of His time on the earth (day) and the time when He will be off the earth (the night). Then He speaks of His identity.

**“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:5)**

What does light do? It helps us see. It also causes things to grow. It is part of why our world works like it does. It heats the earth and causes the weather. Experientially for people, though, light is for seeing. This man could not see. He symbolizes, in part, a dead world whose members cannot see in a spiritual sense

**“When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” (John 9:6)**

A lot happens here. First off, in those days people thought spit had medicinal properties. When I’ve asked who thought this was gross it was moms who said it was. Then I pointed out that many moms have used spit to clean a kid’s face in church. This makes me believe that many moms think that their spit is magical, so those first century people aren’t **that** weird!

The religious leaders of the day, though, were suspicious of it for two reasons:

- 1) Many people who practiced occultist magical arts did things like this and
- 2) Mixing dirt and spit was considered work and this happened on the Sabbath

Jesus makes mud from dirt and spittle and spreads it over the man's eyes.

**“When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” (John 9:6)**

It strikes me that when Jesus spits in dirt He takes water from Himself and mixes it with the raw ingredients with which He and the rest of the Godhead made man in the first place. We see here, then, the water of Life and the raw ingredients for men. This is symbolic of Jesus Himself: the water of life in a human body!

So He basically, in a symbolic sense, anoints this man's blind eyes with Himself.

**“And He said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.” (John 9:7)**

Then He says “Go to Siloam....Sent (which Jesus was) and the man went to Sent, washed and came back seeing.

I spend a lot of time observing people and I've noticed that people become landmarks to other people. We assign people to roles and that's pretty much where we trap them in our minds. For instance I do a variety of types of ministry and people where I live are well acquainted with that fact.

One day a woman at the church we attend, who knows me really well, introduced me to her brother like this, “This is Mike. He's a counselor.” It really bothered me. To my mind I am a pastor and I counsel, travel, teach, do conferences and many other things. To this lady I was a landmark. “Counselor” is where I fit in her reference points. To her, this one is a minister. This one is a druggist. This one is a nurse and that one...he's a counselor.

To the blind man's neighbors he was a landmark: that blind beggar.

**“Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, ‘Is not this he who sat and begged?’” (John 9:8)**

The problem for them was that when he walked around and could see he ceased to fit in as they had always known him and they DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HIM!

**“Some said, ‘This is he.’ Others said, ‘He is like him.’ He said, ‘I am he.’” (John 9:9)**

There are a few things I would like for us to see in this verse. The first is that when we look at someone, and this includes when we view ourselves, let's not fall into the trap of seeing how we are now as a landmark. A landmark is "a fixed marker, such as a concrete block, that indicates a boundary line."

If God really is God, and He is, we are not "fixed in a spot"; we are designed to be moved, changed, healed, repaired, etc. but plenty of times we see ourselves or someone else and all we see is what is lacking or what is wrong and we think, "That person will ALWAYS be like that." When we do this we see ourselves in terms of who that person is: permanently dysfunctional or whatever.

This is a crucial thing for us to grasp. A part of faith in God as it pertains to people is to see people in terms of our potentials, in terms of what God CAN do with them and is to see ourselves in terms of what God CAN do with us!

People assumed that this blind man would always be a fixture: the blind beggar. They were so convinced of that that when he got up and could see they didn't even recognize him! Let's not be like that. Let's develop, instead, the habit of EXPECTING people to change. This is how we are designed. It is health. It is God's way.

The second thing I would like us to see is that it must have been very disorienting for this man. He had never been able to see and now he could. Can you imagine how overwhelming it must have been for him? I believe that the same is true of a person who suddenly "sees" a truth. We who are used to seeing it don't typically take into account how disorienting that must be for them.

Recently I sat with a woman as she literally went through 1/2 a box of Kleenex. She was "seeing" for the first time the devastation that the body of Christ has suffered from impersonal religion. I had to try to put myself in her situation so I could empathize with her and remember how I felt when I first saw it. She wailed and it was almost too much for me. When we minister sight to someone we must take this into account and give them a chance to get used to the overwhelming nature of this good thing that is happening to them. We must comfort them.

You know, when we think about getting our sight back if we were blind, we often think about seeing nice things: babies, trees and a beautiful blue sky. When this man was able to see for the first time all that happened for him, but he also started seeing things that were hard to look at...ugly things....damaged things. It is significant that in Romans 12, a chapter that speaks of spiritual giftings, we are taught this:



**“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”  
(Romans 12:15 NASB)**

Often when a person receives something from the Lord both these are necessary.

Finally, I would like us to see that Jesus had given a man his sight and the people seem to have missed the awesomeness of that incredible blessing.

**“Some said, ‘This is he.’ Others said, ‘He is like him.’ He said, ‘I am he.’” (John 9:9)**

No one says, “Wow! Praise God! You have your sight!!!! WOOHOO!”

As we move through this life and minister Jesus to people we WILL see God's works made apparent in many little ways, if we pay attention. Let's take the time to mull that over when it happens. Let's sit next to someone who has been touched by God in even what seems to us to be a small way (it could be HUGE to that person) and let's have a little wow-fest with that person.

God doesn't have to do anything like this for us; it's all a gift. Let's honor Him by recognizing it and let's love one another by enjoying it when God does something for someone else. Imagine what might have happened if one of us was there and we walked with that guy for a while and said, “That's a tree. That's mud. Isn't the sky beautiful?” and, “Wow! God has given you your sight!”

Instead, as if he isn't disoriented enough, he hears familiar voices debating if he is himself. His response: “I am he.”

**“Therefore they said to him, ‘How were your eyes opened?’ He answered and said, ‘A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.’” (John 9:10-11)**

Obedience is very simple. Jesus did something...put something in motion. He told the man to do something and the man went, he did it and received sight! So simple. Jesus ALWAYS has something in motion. He is always talking to us, telling us something so we can enjoy what He has put into motion. We simply need to do it and receive whatever it is He has for us. A few years ago I came up with a term that has become a credo: “Let's not let anything go to waste that Jesus died to give us.” We should try to live like that.

**“Then they said to him, ‘Where is He?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’”  
(John 9:12)**

I think that if that was me I would want to smack someone and say, “DUH! I was blind!” Thankfully he doesn’t do this. He is brought to a Pharisee. There’s nothing like a visit to a law bound spiritual leader to completely rob one of his joy at having gotten a touch from Jesus.

**“They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees.”  
(John 9:13)**

This is interesting: a man who was (physically) blind and can now see (the spiritual having spilled into his physical life) is standing before men who are blind and getting more and more blind (spiritually). Whenever we deal with the law-bound we can bet they are thinking about one thing: the law. Their thought is: “What little rule did YOU break today? We know there’s one in there somewhere!”

**“Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.” (John 9:14)**

So, they interrogate him.

**“Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.’” (John 9:15)**

Can you imagine what is going on inside this guy? “Isn’t anyone going to celebrate that I can see?!?!?!?” Why don’t the Pharisees help him rejoice? It’s because they do not care about him. Basically, Jesus has only one problem with people; it really bugs Him when we are not being who we really are. These guys were *supposed* to be the shepherds of Israel.

**“The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, ‘Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered. All you beasts of the field, all you beasts in the forest, come to eat. His watchmen are blind, all of them know nothing. All of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, dreamers lying down, who love to slumber; and the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.’” (Isaiah 56:8-11 NASB)**

**“My tent is destroyed, and all my ropes are broken; my sons have gone from me and are no more. There is no one to stretch out my tent again or to set up my curtains. For the shepherds have become stupid and have not sought the LORD; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered..”**  
(Jeremiah 10:20-21 NASB)

**“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!,” declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: ‘You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds,’ declares the LORD. ‘Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply. I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,’ declares the LORD.”**  
(Jeremiah 23:1-4 NASB)

Recently I read a newspaper article by a man in Chicago. He was the son of a Pentecostal minister and a minister himself that worked as a writer. He no longer attended church. He sent his wife and kids off...but he couldn't stomach the big business of church. He told a story that broke my heart. He tried for weeks to call and email the head pastor of the church he attended. Finally the head pastor called him and asked him a question that justified his lack of availability, “If you called the phone company would you expect to be able to talk to the CEO?”

I wonder what Jesus thinks of the corporate church world of today?

**“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!”** (Jeremiah 23:1 NASB)

God always has an answer. He goes on to say that He will raise up Jesus, the branch of David, to handle this problem.

**“Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.”** (Jeremiah 3:15 NASB)

In John 9 and all through the gospels we see Jesus face to face with the men He put in place to shepherd His flock. He is also face to face with the damage of their neglect. Jesus also knew that what was promised in Jeremiah 23 was about to be

instituted. He would die and in Him those of us who receive Him as Lord would die with Him, be buried with Him and rise with Him.

**“Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.’” (John 9:15)**

These men were poor shepherds, fighting for a territory and not taking care of what came with the territory. This poor man, the one who now can see, just tells them what happened. The religious “experts” make a judgment using their own warped beliefs as a standard.

**“Therefore some of the Pharisees said, ‘This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them.” (John 9:16)**

They are saying, basically, “God (in human skin)...is not from God.” They believe that the day of the week is more important than the people are and I am convinced all that really matters to God is people. In Mark 2, Jesus addresses this matter of the Sabbath.

**“And He was saying to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.’” (Mark 2:27 NASB)**

God instituted that for OUR good and not for His own good because HE NEEDS NOTHING!

**“And He was saying to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’” (Mark 2:27-28 NASB)**

So, when the Pharisees said this:

**“Therefore some of the Pharisees said, ‘This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them.” (John 9:16)**

I don’t think they could be more wrong.

Notice what happens among people unified against Jesus...when Jesus just is Himself: “there was a division among them.” Recently, in the internet channel in

which this study was written, I was talking with a man. His doctrine keeps him shackled. We were talking about some scriptures that challenge those doctrines with freedom in Christ and his instinctive response was to divide himself from us.

He proclaimed himself to be the “enemy” in the channel and he left. I responded with an email in which I told him, “You aren’t the enemy. You’re us. I was preaching the truth and the Lord was convicting you.”

**“They said to the blind man again, ‘What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’”  
(John 9:17)**

Let’s see this: this man was blind from birth and then he was healed. No one who was supposed to be watching over his soul cared enough about him to rejoice with him. Instead, they interrogate him and seem to be trying to trap him. They just said, “He isn’t of God, this man who healed you” and then they ask him, “What do YOU think about him?”

This formerly blind man had guts and integrity. He replies, “He is a prophet.” That took courage.

Have you ever noticed how people will ask questions and really don’t want an answer? They ask what he thinks and he answers in direct opposition to what they want to hear, so they respond!

**“But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.” (John 9:18)**

They didn’t believe him! Imagine this: the word of the man who EXPERIENCED a miracle isn’t as good to them as is his parents’ word.

**“And they asked them, saying, ‘Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?’” (John 9:19)**

It’s like they doubt he really had been blind.

**“His parents answered them and said, ‘We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself.’” (John 9:20-21)**

They weren’t there to see it happen. This next part is sad.



**“His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.” (John 9:22)**

One big job of the Jewish leaders was to be a go-between for men to get to God. Here we see that they had decided that if a person agreed with Jesus that He was the Christ they would be kicked out of the institution that God used back then to bring people closer to God. Another sad thing is that this very often happens now in Christendom.

**“Therefore his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’” (John 9:23)**

The parents were afraid of the people charged by God to care for them. That is so sad. The Pharisees call the man back and command him to do something they themselves aren't doing. This is known as hypocrisy.

**“So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, ‘Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.’” (John 9:24)**

They catch on that what happened to the man was good. They are in a tough spot. Jesus had definitely ministered healing and they didn't want the good attached to Jesus so they were scrambling to somehow acknowledge the good healing part while also discrediting Jesus. I have to say that if we find ourselves hustling to make something happen it probably isn't of God; it's probably us walking after the flesh.

The Pharisees were hustling to somehow acknowledge the good healing part while also discrediting Jesus. They are asking him to give God the glory for this healing by lying and saying that God didn't heal him through Jesus. Isn't that crazy?!?! The more I read this, the more I appreciate this man who sees; I appreciate how basic and wise he is.

**“He answered and said, ‘Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.’” (John 9:25)**

Isn't that beautiful? When God touches a person in what we call a charismatic way and does something and then that person reports simply what God has done, people whose standard is their own (incomplete) understanding (since ALL our understanding is limited) will challenge it. They think, “if I don't believe it or haven't experienced it - it must not be real.”

This is a classic case of people measuring themselves by themselves.

**“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (2 Corinthians 10:12 - NKJV)**

What can we do when that happens? I think our only choices are:

- 1) Lie about it
- 2) Roll over and not say anything
- 3) Do what this guy did: just say what you saw, heard, experienced, etc.

**“One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”  
(John 9:25b)**

In other words, we just “TRUTH” ‘em and then rest in that. I love this guy. He sees the trap and won’t play into it. He says, “I have no idea if he is a sinner or not but I’ll tell you what I DO know, I was blind and now I can see.” And, really, if you were blind and then could see, what would matter most to YOU?

This must tick the Pharisees off really bad because he’s not playing the “get Jesus” game, so they are still hustling to discredit Him.

**“Then they said to him again, ‘What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?’” (John 9:26)**

Now they go after the technique Jesus used to heal him. If I were the guy I might tell them, “Well duh! I was blind!!!! How should I know what he did?!?!?!” but, instead, he has the audacity to stand up to abusive and neglectful leaders.

**“He answered them, ‘I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?’” (John 9:27)**

That last part, for the record, (“Do you also want to become His disciples?”) is a bad idea. I suggest you not go messing with spiritual leaders like that. If you want, I’ll show you my scars sometime. When I did it, I did it for the same reason this guy did: I was immature.

**“Then they reviled him and said, ‘You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples.’ (John 9:28)**

Their response teaches us something. They immediately turn to division as a way of handling him. Its like they drew a line; on one side it says “US” and on the

other side it says “NOT US.” When the man said what he did the Pharisees thrust him over to the “NOT US” side.

There is some comfort in this: it’s not so bad when you are on their “NOT US” side...when Jesus is over there with you. They said, “Moses is over here with us and you’re over there with Jesus.” I would think deep inside me, “YAY!”

**“We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.” (John 9:29)**

They were right about that first part that God spoke to Moses. They were also right about that other part: “as for this fellow (Jesus), we do not know where He is from.” That was the problem; they didn’t know where He was from.

When God presents something or does something, it exists. Even if we disagree or don’t understand it or don’t even believe it exists, it still does. In order for us to benefit from it we need to agree with Him about that. Either way we will be affected by it.

For instance, if God has restoration for me and I don’t believe God does that, the grace for that is there for me. My ignorance...my not knowing....causes me to never tap that grace so I remain hurt, damaged, bound, etc.

I think that happens a lot and I consider it a tragic waste of perfectly good grace.

**“The man answered and said to them, ‘Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!’” (John 9:30)**

To the man who now could see, the main thing was the main thing.

**“Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.” (John 9:31-32)**

Check it out! This man was a nobody and he is teaching the Pharisees about how God works. He’s awesome!

**“If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.” (John 9:33)**

This is a lot like the quote in Philippians 4:13, **“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”**

We can see that in John 9 someone is out of line and someone else speaks truth straight from God. When we realize that we are wrong, what are our options?

- 1) We can dodge the issue
- 2) We can admit our error, repent and change our mind
- 3) We can kick the truth speaker out

What do the Pharisees do?

**“They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’” (John 9:34)**

They discredit him and they cast him out. Let’s compare; when Jesus was asked early on why this man was blind Jesus answered, **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.” (John 9:3)**. That, then, is the truth of the matter. He is not a sinner as evidenced by his blindness. He IS a sinner because he and everyone else there BUT Jesus is lost but he isn’t blind because of his being a sinner.

Later the Pharisees kick him out of the synagogue and their opinion of him is this: **“You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” (John 9:34)**. People use exclusion as a flesh tool; they exclude people to control them or to protect themselves. If it is to protect themselves they usually keep quiet about it. If it is to control them they talk about it to communicate to the one excluded that this is a willful act on the part of the one excluding.

That first bit of information: that if it is to protect themselves, they usually keep quiet about it can help us to forgive people who have excluded or rejected us. Often it wasn’t personal they were just trying to be god in their own lives. This was because they felt unsafe and did the best they could to be their own strong tower.

Now, if it was that second one...if the person is vocal and aggressive about the exclusion there is a good chance they are trying to control us. This understanding can help us be free of someone else’s manipulation by setting up godly boundaries and surrendering our attempts to not be controlled by someone else. Instead, our boundaries basically place us into God’s hands so He can protect us. In this case, it’s good to forgive the person for trying to manipulate and control us.

We should bear in mind that this is a broad generalization and often the person in question isn’t doing this in a premeditated way. Most often they are often obeying strongholds in their own souls that are in operation in their lives. We are, after all,

just people. This behavior is simply “natural” as opposed to “spiritual”. The hope is that as we walk ever more consistently in the Spirit with the Lord, we’ll exclude others less and less consistently.

**“They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’” (John 9:34)**

What happens next is very cool:

**“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’” (John 9:35)**

Jesus **goes** to those who are excluded from places in which He wants them to be. His question for the man is telling: “Do you believe in the Son of God?” or as we have been learning: “Do you ‘be living’ in the Son of God?” (“Do you fully entrust yourself to the Son of God?”).

The man’s response is almost heartbreaking as he is **so** open and honest and transparent.

**“He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’” (John 9:36)**

He turns to Jesus and entrusts himself in Jesus to direct him to this Son of God. Why? He does it because of what Jesus had sown into his life and because of how He did it: humbly.

This is something we Christians must see if we are to fully emerge into our destinies as ministers of reconciliation and holy priests: when we minister Jesus to someone they trust us especially if we didn’t **have** to do anything for them. I tell people all the time, men more than women because men are so bad about opening up to another person that everyone needs someone who will listen to them and doesn’t **have** to listen to them.

They trust us. What will we do with that? We must do what Jesus did: He directed the man to the Christ.

**“He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’” (John 9:36-37)**



In the case of Jesus, He was the Christ, so he directed the man to Himself. Such is not the case with us or shouldn't be the case. We are merely to be signposts that direct people to the King. We play our part but He is the point.

People are tempted to latch on to some mere human that may have been so mightily utilized in their salvation, freeing, restoration, etc. We just must be aware of this. It's good to teach people to see God's hand in all He is doing.

Let's look again at the sequence we see in this part of Chapter 9.

The man stands up for Jesus. The Pharisees reject him.

**“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’” (John 9:35)**

The man confesses his ignorance.

**“He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’” (John 9:36)**

Jesus points him to the Lord (Himself).

**“And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’” (John 9:37)**

The man responds appropriately.

**“Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” (John 9:38)**

Then Jesus turns to the Pharisees and speaks to them.

**“And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.’” (John 9:39)**

That's a heavy statement. Jesus allows people to see what the deal really is. When we are lost and/or bound up we think we can see, but really, we are blind. Have you ever shared something with someone and the scales fell away and suddenly they saw? Sometimes it's painful to walk through that with someone.

Some of the Pharisees pick up on what He is saying.

**“Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’” (John 9:40)**

That is uncharacteristic humility on their behalf. It’s the potential beginning of something for them.

**“Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.’” (John 9:41)**

God is often paradoxical in how He deals with us. When we think we are strong...we are really weak and if we think we can see....we’re blind. How can we dig ourselves out of this situation? First, we can do it by not trying to dig ourselves out. Let’s just admit our weakness, foolishness, blindness and let God take care of it

**“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” (James 4:10 NASB)**

Father, we thank You for this study and we ask that You unfold it more as the days pass. We thank You that while we were once blind, now we see. Let us “see” more through our spiritual eyes that once were blind, and now see. We ask that You continue to clarify our spiritual vision. Continue to mature our gifts and cause us to walk in them, after the Spirit, not after the flesh. Remind us to be in continual prayer, a life style of prayer, Father. Make it so real to us that prayer is not an event. Thank You for good shepherds, for, basically, shepherding us directly and through yielded shepherds. Please continue to heal, restore, fill and fulfill us. Father, we ask that You would bless and keep us, that Your face would shine upon us. Thank You Lord. Father, we ask that You give us chances to sit with someone who has just experienced a miracle. Allow us to be the first “wow.” Allow us to be the first comfort, the first arms to hold. Father more than that, we ask that You give each of us our own miracle. Heal each of us in that area in which we need healing, that area in which we need sight, that area in which we need more of You. Increase our faith Father.

We thank You for Your boundless grace and mercy. Thank You for Your unmeasurable love to us. Overwhelm us with that love, that grace and that mercy. Send Your peace, Your comfort and Your rest. In Jesus’ awesome name we pray. Amen.

## Appendix 1

### Why Did Jesus Come to Us?

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’” (John 4:13-14)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;” (John 5:24-26)

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” (John 6:35)

“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:40)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.” (John 6:47-48)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” (John 6:63)

**“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.’” (John 6:68)**

**“Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)**

**“The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)**

**“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:27-28)**

**“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.’” (John 11:25-26)**

**“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’” (John 14:6)**

**“These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.’” (John 17:1-3)**

Why Did Jesus Come? He came to give us the very thing we crave:

**LIFE!!!!!!**

There are at least a dozen more verses like this just in this Gospel that clearly show that Jesus came that we would have HIS life. The Bible is brimming with this truth. He came. He did as He intended to do.

We receive Him as Savior. We receive Him as Lord. Let's receive Him as our Life!

## Appendix 2

### Does God Speak Today Through Prophets?

In Chapter 5 of the Gospel of John we saw that people typically trust what they can see and can verify from an earthly standpoint – usually to the exclusion of the heavenly. Recently a man I know told me that if a person came to him with a “word” from God he would test the man before allowing him to speak it to him. That is a good thing. The Bible says to test every spirit. (1 John 4:1)

However, what was his test? He would want to know what institutional church the man belonged to: something earthly. If the person with the word refused to do that, this man wouldn’t receive from (God through) him. If the man did not esteem his church, the same thing would happen. Earthly focus. It happens a lot.

His statement and standard for determining if the “word” was real also smacked of judgment. Based on his determination about the group he would judge all the members of that institutional church organization to either be good or bad. This assumes that all members are at the same level of spiritual growth. It also assumes that they all will instinctively make the same spiritual errors or make the same correct spiritual assessments, in this man’s opinion.

The scary thing is that this technique for “testing every spirit” is very common across the body of Christ. The main criteria seems to be: “Does this person worship *exactly* like I do?”

This attitude grieved Jesus when He walked among men and I believe it still does.

**“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:46-47)**

The people Jesus was talking to were doing something that happens to this day. They were picking and choosing what from the Word they would obey. They liked what they were familiar with and disregarded what they weren’t familiar with or what was hard to hear. Jesus is saying, “You like Moses. He wrote about Me but you don’t want Me; therefore, you dishonor Moses and God.”



**“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22 NASB)**

All through Christian history there have been prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers with a real mission: to equip the saints.

**“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:11-16 - NKJV)**

Jesus appoints people to function in these five offices in the body of Christ and Paul tells us they will be in operation until there is unity in the church in terms of faith (utter reliance upon Jesus) and in terms of the knowledge of Jesus. Any realistic survey of the body of Christ will reveal a dismaying absence of unity on these two issues; we still trust ourselves and world systems far more than we do Jesus and we don't really **know** Him.

Despite the wholesale absence of what Paul tells us here a large portion of the church chooses to believe that just the three they can control and handle: evangelists, pastors and teachers are still valid gifts. They largely disregard prophets and apostles who God is still releasing to this day. Yet, until Jesus returns, these people will be supplied by the Father to His church for the building of His kingdom.

Before Jesus was born the prophets were supplied by God for the benefit of the people. What was their purpose? It was primarily to point to Jesus to prepare people for what God was going to do. Words were recorded that pointed to a Person that the Father would release to speak and do His will. Then Jesus came.

In this time God has released prophetic words through all kinds of people. These words from God do not just come from prophets. According to God all Christians, no matter what their primary spiritual gifts are, can prophesy.

**“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17 NASB)**

**“Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV)**

**“I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.” (1 Corinthians 14:5 NASB)**

**“Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.” (1 Corinthians 14:39 NASB)**

(It is important to note that despite many claims to the otherwise “prophesy” in the New Testament does not mean “preaching” from pulpits as we know it. **That** word “preaching” means to “evangelize” which means to preach the gospel to lost people as many street evangelists do to this day in obedience to the Lord’s intention for true evangelism. The Greek word translated as the verb “prophesy” is “propheteuo” and it means “to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office.”)

So, the Lord is still releasing prophetic words to His church because we need them. We have the Bible and love it; it is the “standard of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13) by which we measure all things: thoughts, beliefs, actions and modern day prophetic utterance. We have the “rhema” (“freshly uttered”) Word of God as well and must love it too.

**“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4 NASB)**

**“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.” (Romans 10:17 NASB)**

**“...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word (rhema), that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:25b-27 NASB)**

When the Lord chooses to address here and now situations through prophets or any Christians who prophesy we must listen to them, test the spirit of those words and obey the Lord. To not esteem a prophetic word from Jesus would dishonor the King and would amount to blatant disobedience. We're very aware, from the Word of God, of the costs to God's people for disobeying Him through His prophets.

I'll close with such a word from the apostle Peter, speaking of Moses but applying it to the (rhema) word in the body of Christ:

**“...you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”  
(2 Peter 1:19b-21 NASB)**

Is God speaking today through modern day prophets and others who prophesy? The Word is clear that He is, despite what many in the body of Christ believe to the contrary. The question for us all, then, is: “What will you do with the (rhema) word of God today and what will you do with the people who God chooses to deliver that word?” I pray you will heed the Father through those people.

## Appendix 3

### What Does Salvation Mean?

This topic is the most important one there could ever be as it has to do with removing a barrier between God and man. It is a rich topic and it has many facets. Because of this I seriously doubt that any human could ever fully detail everything that God intends to accomplish through the salvation He has made available in Jesus. Still, it would be good to try!

What follows is what I have come to understand so far about this incredibly intricate and valuable gift from God. I expect that as time goes on I will continue to learn more about salvation.

According to the Word a human has three essential parts: spirit, soul and body.

**“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NASB)**

This scripture lists the three parts in this order for a reason: from God’s perspective we are, first and foremost, spiritual beings. We are born as dead spiritual beings...separated from the life of Christ....yet physically alive. This is a situation we inherited from our great great great great grandparents: Adam and Eve.

When they immediately “died” after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil it was their spirits that died as the Holy Spirit withdrew from their human spirits. He did that to honor their desire to live independent from God. In their minds, God wasn’t enough.

Two trees are mentioned specifically in Eden. The Tree of Life represents Spirit and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents Flesh. By choosing Flesh they essentially chose their human ability to be enough on their own over Him being enough for them.

This is pertinent to us now because the same battle is still on. It all actually has to do with us adding to Him in our lives. All lifestyle sin is particularly a red flag indicating that we don’t trust God to be enough. It is flesh (man depending on himself) and that stands in opposition to Spirit (man dependant upon God).

So we have 3 parts. The body is where we interact with the physical world. It has to do with our five senses. The human soul has to do our ability to think (mind),

feel (emotions) and decide (will). This is where humans interact with one another. The human spirit is where we commune with God, have conscience and intuition.

When a person is “saved” he basically invites the Lord to come dwell in his spirit and Christ’s life gives him life.

**“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you..”**  
**(Romans 8:11 NASB)**

It is not earthly life Jesus is interested in us having. That kind of life is the Greek word “bios”. God wants a more substantial form of life (“zoe”) for us. That was the life lost to us as people in Eden.

It is good for us to see the “spiritual mechanics”, if you will, of how salvation comes to a person. The bible clearly teaches that when we are saved we are literally placed into Jesus (in a spiritual sense).

**“But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:8-10 NASB)**

and...

**“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’”**  
**(Romans 10:13 NASB)**

A person comes to the realization that he is lost and needs Jesus in his life. Romans 10:14 tells us that this happens when a person hears that truth. If the person “believes in” and “confesses Jesus” as his Lord and “calls upon the Lord” he is saved.

The term “believes in” has more to do with faith than it does with mere mental agreement. A person who believes in Jesus for salvation truly understands that he cannot save himself; only Jesus can save him so he entrusts himself to Jesus for this. The word “confess” comes from a Greek word that means to “assent, covenant, acknowledge, make proclamation”. The word “calls” means to “entitle”; this speaks to a person giving the Lord free access to himself.



Many people who identify themselves as Christians have never experienced being born again because many believe that they become Christians by being born in America or into a family that goes to a church building on a regular basis. However, they have never honored or practiced what the Bible so clearly teaches in Romans 10 regarding the actions that must occur in a person's heart for him to receive Jesus for salvation.

What happens in the spiritual realm when the person proclaims that Jesus is his Lord and entrusts himself to the Lord through "believing" and "calls upon" Him? The Bible has a rather startling image for us that seems is rarely discussed in mainstream Christianity. Because of that, most Christians haven't heard it and, therefore, do not benefit from the spiritual reality of the concept.

**"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13 NASB)**

Paul tells us that when we were saved we were "baptized into one body" by "one Spirit". This means that "one Spirit" (the Holy Spirit) "baptized" us or "placed us into" "one body" (the body of Christ, otherwise known as "the Church".) Contrary to common belief within Christianity, from God's viewpoint there aren't multiple churches, either in terms of separate autonomous churches or in terms of denominations. There is one church: the body of Christ and it is into this that we were baptized when we were saved.

In addition, the Bible tells us that this spiritual baptism process has a very intimate component.

**"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27 NASB)**

We were literally baptized **into** Christ. The whole concept of "in" is one of those seemingly simple things that can yield so much depth if we will only meditate upon it and ask the Lord to touch us with its reality. Jesus was impressed with the importance of "in".

**"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." (John 14:10)**

A little later in the same chapter He tells us that after we receive the Holy Spirit we will know the concept that Paul presents in Galatians 3:27. We will know that Jesus is “in” us and we are “in” Him.

**“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (John 14:20)**

This introduces another concept that bears mentioning because it is through this wonderful benefit of salvation that our lives can be changed.

**“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 NASB)**

**“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”  
(Romans 8:11 NASB)**

**“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”  
(Romans 8:14 NASB)**

Yes, when Jesus mentions in John 14 being “in” us He is speaking of how He can live His life through us through His Holy Spirit who dwells in all Christians when they release themselves to Him for this purpose. What an incredible gift this can be in our lives!

It only comes through the crucifixion of Jesus that baptism into Christ is given to all born again people. Not knowing about this has cost many Christians the experience of enjoying the fruit of this amazing aspect of salvation.

When we were baptized or placed into Jesus a lot happened. In fact, from a spiritual perspective, everything that happens to Jesus happens to us. If you could somehow be “in” someone you would experience their experience. Bearing this in mind, what would it be like if you actually, physically could be placed into a person who was being nailed to a cross?

When the nails pierced that person....what would happen to you? You would feel the pain also. The nails would pierce you. What would it be like if it spiritually happened to you bearing in mind that we are, first and foremost, spiritual beings? When He died we would die.

**“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” (Romans 6:3 NASB)**

It's one thing to just be baptized into Jesus. That can be a warm and fuzzy idea until we take into account more of what it all means. Being baptized into Him also means that we were placed into His death so it's like we are sharing in everything with Christ just a little at a time. This is why the apostle Paul craved really knowing Jesus.

**“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship (partnership) of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10-11 NASB)**

Now, when Paul says the following things they make more sense to us.

**“‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.’” (Galatians 2:20 NASB)**

**“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4 NASB)**

When He died what happened to us? We died with Him. When He was buried, in Him, what happened to us? We were buried with Him. When He was raised from the dead what happened to us, in Him? We rose with Him but for what purpose? Romans 6:4 says it was so we could “walk in the newness of life”.

**“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7 NASB)**

Many Christians do not have an instinctive ability to live as if they are truly different than they were when they were saved. One reason is that the literal truth of these verses is rarely taught in the body of Christ. How can we know if no one teaches us?

I am talking about this now because many read about the death on the cross as if it is just history. When that is the case in our eyes it becomes something that merely happened. However, if we see it with spiritual eyes and we know that even though we can't **feel** it, in Christ, it happened to us too, we would live it. We would live differently.

How differently **would** we live? We would live "in the newness of life". The word "newness" refers to being **TOTALLY** different and **TOTALLY** new. The word "life" is the Greek word "zoe" that we mentioned earlier in this article. It refers to God-derived life as opposed to "bios" which is mere and, therefore, inferior physical life. How many of us, even in the church, live from adrenaline rush to adrenalin rush? It is nothing but "bios"! Jesus came that we would have eternal "zoe" (life)!

So many of us were taught that we are merely renovated when we are saved – that we are the same old us but now we have to try to live a cleaner life, the "Christian" life. This is a life that we attempt to live in accordance to some script of behaviors. It's no wonder we melt down! The Word, though, teaches that we are totally new!

So many of us, likewise, were taught that salvation is rather puny: just about going to heaven when we die. Salvation is about much more than that. We **DO** go to heaven when we physically die but **much** more happens! God has, through our baptism into Christ given mankind back what it lost in the Garden!

He has given us our life back. "Zoe" life. This **LIFE** comes as a package deal. **EVERYTHING** lost in Eden is restored.

God "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ," (Ephesians 1:3b NASB) "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless" (Ephesians 1:4 NASB) "He has made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6 NASB) "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him" (Ephesians 1:11a NASB) "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13 NASB)

We are in Christ and in Him we are holy and pure and valuable, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we are accepted and we have an inheritance. We must live holy lives because He has made us holy.

Whenever anything is mentioned by God a single time in the Bible it is significant simply because He said it. Whenever He takes the time to say something twice, it is even more significant. It's how He emphasizes a topic. What would you say if I told you there was a topic that shows up 250 times in the New Testament? How about if I told you it shows up 30 times just in the short letter to the Ephesians? That would indicate that this was a VERY important topic to the Lord and, therefore, to us.

The truth to which I refer is the idea of being “in” Jesus and qualities associated with that. Over and over we see terms like “in Christ”, “in Jesus”, “in the Son”, “in the beloved”, “in Jesus Christ”, “in Christ Jesus” and attached to them are qualities. Some of these are “chosen”, “righteous” “blessed” and “faithful”.

It would be good for us to look for “in Christ” verses in the New Testament and receive them because they are part of the gospel, the good news, and are part of why Jesus died for us.

All these things apply to what Peter referred to as “the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:19). This is the changing of our minds, wills and emotions to more closely resemble those of Jesus Himself. Another word for this process is “sanctification” and it is part of a promise that the Spirit made through Paul when he wrote this to us:

**“...He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” (Philippians 1:6b NASB)**

At the beginning of this piece I said that the topic of salvation is an intricate one that has many facets. I encourage you to do as I intend to do: keep seeking Jesus on salvation. What a rich gift He has given us!



## CLOSING NOTES

In the beginning of this volume I said that the original book has been broken into two volumes in order to make them easier to handle due to how many pages of text there are and to satisfy copywrite requirements. Volume One addresses chapters 1-9 of the Gospel of John. Our plan is to print Volume Two of “The Gospel of John – As Seen Through The Eyes of a Relative Nobody” as soon as possible.

The title of this book is “The Gospel of John” and is subtitled “as seen through the eyes of a relative nobody”. I pray that the Lord has touched you as you have read this volume. I made some points that I know will bother some people who have read it; those points were not made for that purpose. Rather, I believe that the Lord has placed me in a position in the body of Christ where I have a vantage point – I can see trends, belief systems, habits, assumptions, etc.

Many of these have been good and have been a blessing to the body of Christ as a whole and of me as an individual. Some of these, though, seem to be hindering the cause of Christ and the building of His kingdom. I would rather be able to stand before Him knowing that I did my best to honor what I believe He would have me say than compromise that for the purpose of pleasing people.

That having been said, if I have offended you at all in this volume I ask your forgiveness. If In the offense, you have grown....I praise the Lord!

God bless you in your pursuit of Jesus, His kingdom and His joy.

Pastor Mike McInerney  
Mike McInerney Ministries  
Decatur, Texas  
© March 25, 2009









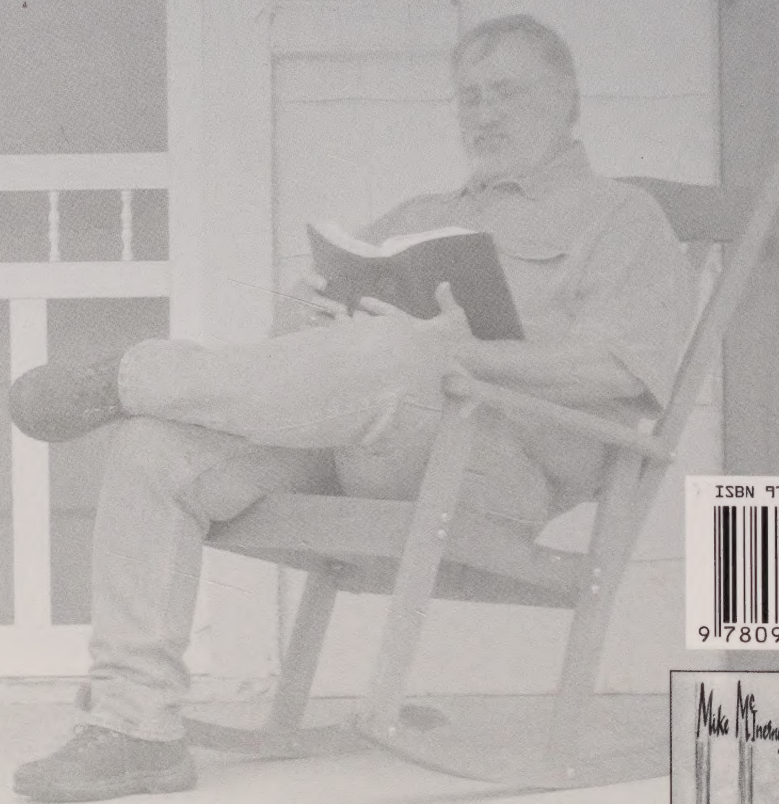


Learn from the Apostle John about Jesus. Come to know and more fully trust Jesus.  
Be equipped to live the Christian life in power. Walk in freedom from bondage!  
Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

***"...these are written  
that you may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of God,  
and that believing  
you may have life  
in His name."***

(John 20:31 - NKJV)

***Learn to "be living" in Christ!***



ISBN 978-0-9824401-0-0



**PASTOR MICHAEL K. MCINERNEY, MA** is the "relative nobody" referred to in the subtitle to this book. He is founder and president of Mike McInerney Ministries, Inc. and has extensive pastoral and ministry experience as a pastor, counselor, teacher, prison and jail minister and hospice and nursing home chaplain. He and his wife, Laurie, produced and have presented their "Union With Christ Conference" © in Texas and Missouri and are available to present it on a first come-first serve basis. They reside in Decatur, Texas with their family.

